

VID VITENSKAPELIGE HØGSKOLE
MISJONSHØGSKOLEN I STAVANGER

**THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION IN THE
INTEGRATION OF NORTH KOREAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH
AT DURIHANA CENTER IN SOUTH KOREA**

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Religion

By

RENATE SOLBERG

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Dedicated to

Dad

Svein Solberg

21.05.1939 - 13.01.2013

for being the floor and walls in my life

God, my Father

for loving an orphan like me

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Sandnes, Norway, 20.05.2015

Renate Solberg

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Theme and background

Children and youth are often people groups without a clear voice in many societies today. They often need someone older to speak on their behalf and to claim their rights. By focusing on how former North Korean children have integrated religiously into a South Korean organization I wanted to give these children a voice of their own, for them to be heard within the system they are in, and outside, nationally and internationally, if possible, especially since their origin is a country where there is no free press and the borders are closed to anyone asking critical questions. I wanted to contribute to their lives and experiences having meaning.

1.1.1 HISTORY

Since the civil war between South and North Korea from 1950-53 the country has been divided into two separate countries, the Republic of Korea (ROK) supported by the United States of America, in the war and after, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) supported in the war and after by the Soviet Union (now Russia) and China. The leader of North Korea, Kim Il-sung, made self-reliance and self-sufficiency the priority of the country, combined with nationalism, resulting in a specific Socialism that kept them apart from the closest neighbors, becoming one of the most complete regimes of the twentieth century, developing into a cult. After 1958 the leader ceased to address religious people in his daily speeches and put religious people in the lowest class stating that religion was a threat to the state. At the same time the leader portrayed himself as the 'fatherly parental leader' and 'sun of the nation' with strong religious undertones. Many fled the North to China due to persecution, natural disasters and food shortage, and churches and mission organizations in China and South Korea have been active in helping refugees, also sharing their faith with them. Nowadays more and more children and youth are arriving South Korea, directly from North Korea, or born in China, many times with a Chinese father, but North Koreans integrating into South Korea, has been little researched so far (Kim 2015: 193, 195-196, 256, 267-268.)

1.1.2 RELIGION IN SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA

North Korea is a country with a rich religious heritage. Korea's 5000 year long history includes strong ties with Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, the capital Pyongyang in North Korea

once being called “the Jerusalem of Asia” because of all the revivals there in the early 2000 century. South Korea has recently seen a Christian revival changing the nation, especially since the late 1970’s until the early 2000’s. Since the split in 1953 North Korea has officially been a nation without religion. Religious teaching is forbidden (an official church is set up for the West) and according to dissidents harsh punishment is received if becoming religious. The politics of North Korea, and the respect and reverence for the late leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Young-il, can arguably be claimed a religion of its own. Today they follow a strict political leader, Kim Young-il's son, Kim Young-eun, and religious sites and material are destroyed and forbidden (Kim 2015).

1.1.3 CHURCH RESPOND

After the Second World War atheistic Communism prevailed in the north, religious activity was banned and many Christians fled South during the split of the nation. Being influenced by the United States and fearing communism, pastors in the South encouraged the church to support the modernization struggle. Associating themselves with Jesus’ suffering on the cross the Christians willingly worked hard and sacrificed for national good, being influenced by liberation and independence movements, denouncing military government and were imprisoned and tortured for their political activities. Min Jung theology, siding with the poor and oppressed, made significant contribution to workers’ and human rights which eventually lead to a democratic government in South Korea in 1988 (Kim 2008: 178-179).

By 2005 almost 30 per cent of the South Korean population regarded themselves as Christian (Kim 2008: 180) in comparison to 1 per cent in 1919, and it is considered to be a true success story in Asia (Jenkins 2011: 186, 90). Thousands of churches and millions becoming Christians in a short time span changed the entire atmosphere. Most of them were urban, middle class people, they were technology-oriented and saw the country’s growing wealth to be a blessing from God (Kim 2008: 180).

Concerning the North South relations the democratic election of the Catholic president Kim Dae-Jung, “Korea’s Nelson Mandela” (Jenkins 2011: 186) changed the southern climate towards the North with his ‘sunshine policy’ and stirred the nation’s emotions with reunion meetings of families that had been separated more than half a century. The churches’ first respond, after five decades of hostility, was to pray for national unity and reconciliation, and participating in a humanitarian assistance program of the

Christian Council of Korea that campaigned for restoration of the churches in North Korea. Teachings about loving your neighbor and your enemy became widespread and in addition the importance of being part of inter-Korean exchanges. Along with the governmental agencies the churches have provided humanitarian aid to their brothers up North. They have also cared for North Korean defectors, helping them assimilate into South Korean society (Lee 2009: 119, 126, 120). This also marked the start of helping North Korean defectors assimilate into the South Korean society. The willingness was tremendous. On the other side among the Christians in South Korea, within those who fled for their lives during the war, there has been a strong desire to conquer Kim Jong-un, the current leader. They used the church as their army against the enemy which was godless Communism. Their strong objection was that the church's help to the North prolonged North Korean dictatorship. My studies will be focused specifically on whether or not these defectors from North Korea have been assimilated into this South Korean Christianity found in the Presbyterian Durihana, whether or not their faith and lifestyle have changed. And whether the change from Confucian tradition or no faith at all to Christianity is esteemed to be sustainable or not. In this I have looked at the role of religion in Durihana, as well as the cultural and social aspect of it, and tried to answer what struggles and opportunities the children have had in this integration process.

Today's decline describes the Korean churches, especially Protestant conservative churches, like Durihana. At the turn of the twenty-first century the churches were emptied of their vitality. The Protestant church was tainted by scandals, being accused of wanting 'religious power' with little public forum for debate and criticism of the hierarchy many experienced there. Many started campaigning for a more open church (Kim 2015: 283-284, 286, 288-289). Recent articles have been written on how the younger generation is not following in their parents' footsteps. Christianity has not managed to modernize, and the demands on early morning and late night prayer meetings, spending the whole Sunday in church, combined with little attention to open communication and the individual has ended in a massive youth escape from the churches (www.koreabang.com). It has been interesting to find out how a traditional church and organization like Durihana has handled the youth coming their way.

1.2 Research overview

There is not much relevant literature and until recently the defectors have been fairly few and it is hard to verify their past experiences and facts about previous lives in North Korea. The numerous coming

now is causing a problem for the South Korean government, and the inhabitants of the country are changing their reaction to skepticism and fear, unlike the previous generation that remembered the war, lived through it and felt a much deeper connection with the North (Kim 2015).

1.2.1 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON NORTH KOREA

When it comes to previous research on religious integration of North Koreans, I found no books, but surveys with numbers on who considered themselves Christians, and some relevant online articles concerning integration, barely mentioning religion. A study presented in March 2013 found only 16 articles in English related to discuss youth and education, but even just the last two years several more have been written (Ham 2013: 1).

As of March 2014 there were 26 483 North Korean refugees living in South Korea, 40% being children and young adults under 29. This research states that especially children have a hard time integrating into South Korean society, with a much greater chance of being bullied, affecting the popularity among peers negatively and having low self-esteem, added to being shorter in height and lower in weight than the average South Korean youth. Many also suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and loneliness, their experience of trauma having greater impact on their psychological health than adults, causing them to drop out of school and struggling to find jobs (Jiyoung 2015: 1-2, 5, 8-10). According to Nicewander's master thesis on how North Korean youth adjust to life in South Korea, she found that because North Korea mostly have "physical jobs" that require little mental creativity or production, it is difficult for North Koreans to attain higher education. They have not had the opportunity to do so in their home country. She found that fitting into the South Korean culture was difficult, and they developed a tendency to stay inside and only socialize with other defectors, yet strive to be seen the same as South Koreans (Nicewander 2013: 67).

This is backed up in the Asia Report of July 14, 2011 (2011: 1). It says that North Koreans are more poorly educated, less healthy and less likely to have useful skills. Since they are used to the bureaucracy making most decisions, there are hardly any choice in food, education or employment. They struggled the most with a feeling of not belonging which made them spend week-ends doing homework, listening to music and reading, instead of going out with friends or shopping, like most South Korean youth do. Because of not belonging and not socializing with other South Koreans, many

of them end up in schools specifically for North Koreans, where they would feel better about themselves (Nicewander 2013: 68-69). A report from 2013 states that 54% of North Korean teenagers drop out of regular school to attend specialized schools (Lee 2013: 5). The Asia report of 2011 goes into details on how the situations for North Korean defectors are in the area of health care, mental health, language and so forth. Their general conclusion is very negative, that almost all refugees fail to integrate and thrive in the South Korean society. They report that defectors used to receive a lavish welcome in the past, but because of the political climate changing and the defectors becoming numerous, facilities have not kept up. It mentions that particularly religious groups, have stepped up to help (2011: 1) and includes a small section of the report on describing this.

Since there is no religious freedom in the North, it is surprising that most North Korean defectors say they follow some faith, and a survey from 2003 three quarters of those surveyed identified themselves as Christians (Asia report 2011: 26). A research from 2006 stated 62.3% North Koreans became Christians, compared to 25% of South Koreans, but interesting enough the same study does not indicate that their choice was affected by their religious follow of Kim Jong-il (Lee 2013: 7, 11). Since South Korean and Korean-American missionaries have distributed Bibles, providing shelter and money for defectors to reach Seoul, many defectors are introduced to Christianity before arrival. In Hanawon, the center that welcomes and teaches the dissidents after arriving, a whole floor in the education building is devoted to religious education. When their 2 – 3 months there have ended, many South Korean churches hold services for defectors and provide support services, some even creating alternative schools, like Durihana. Some aid is material and financial, but the appeal seems to be strong on the spiritual aspect (Asia report 2011: 26).

1.3 The problem

But how does religion affect these children and how are they integrated into Durihana and in the general Korean society? What goes on on the inside of these organizations that suddenly take over the protective care, schooling and spare time of these young ones?

Within these question I believe my research can fit and contribute. My research will only fill a small hole, but I hope I can cover at least some of these questions and give an adequate insight. I concentrated my focus on the religious, and in this case, Christianity aspect, since the school I visited

had a clear Christian profile and program. I found out the details of their church program, what was mandatory and not, and what felt mandatory, and whether or not they were affected by it. I focused on the defectors and their experiences they had in the months and years they had lived at Durihana, their previous faith and faith experiences, if any in North Korea and China, and what they believed now.

1.3.1 MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEM AND SUB QUESTIONS

The object of my research is integration into a dedicated Christian organization who conducts a church and a school for children and youth escaping North Korea. My main research question is whether or not these North Korean youth are religiously integrated into Durihana, and if so, how it happens. Are their spiritual beliefs changed after entering this organization? How does the strong focus on religion in Durihana impact them, and their understanding of what it means to be integrated? What struggles and opportunities do they have in this integration process?

It was also interesting to focus on the level of reflection they could portray. Do they have any level of reflection and critical thinking on how religion is forming their daily lives? Do they experience freedom in the choices concerning religious practice and lifestyle? In the time I lived there I daily looked for written and ‘unwritten’ rules, trying to detect if they had any reflection around this or opinions of their own, or if on the contrary they had no answers, did not understand the questions or were seemingly instructed and passive in what to do and have opinions about. Did they have answers to whether or not they and their peers were religiously integrated? Further on I had many questions around their relationships inside and outside Durihana, whether or not they visited and were involved in other churches, met Christians outside Durihana, or other South Korean youth.

There are also personal reasons why I chose this specific people group as a research object. Being born and adopted from South Korea is one of them. Since I heard about North Korea and the conditions there for the first time in 1997, I have always found it interesting. I went with a group to South Korea and China to pray for North Korea in 1997 and 1998, and I walked across Tumen river in the north of China and into the country itself. I also met some of the first North Koreans that escaped into China while being there. There I learned about the conditions in their homeland and the new life they now had as hidden illegal citizens in China which contributed to my fascination and later on, determination to

research them on a deeper level.

1.4 Relevance of research

Since the government, churches and education system in South Korea are receiving more and more dissidents it will be important for them to learn about the integration process and how to better integrate the increasing number of people coming. Already integration has become a big cultural, financial and systematically challenge in the trendy and increasingly Western South Korea, and teachers, churches and leaders have very little knowledge and guidelines in how to do it in a good way. I hope my research can be of help to those working with North Korean dissidents, especially pastors and leaders in churches and organizations. If my research can answer the question to how religion is integrated and which role it plays in this high profile organization, it will provide important evidence to what is really going on inside the walls, which specific discourses are found and why.

Another point is relevance for the organization itself. It might be interesting for them to receive a Western outside perspective on their organization, their culture, religious practice, underlying rules and to read a critical respond to the answers they give and the observations made. I hope this can give the youth, volunteers and leaders a deeper insight. How has Durihana succeeded or failed in integration of youth and children who are more vulnerable, open and changeable than most adults?

Another aspect is the international interest in this country and what happens to its citizens. Daily worldwide media, with Norwegian media on the high end, publishes news and information about what they believe is going on inside North Korea. The last years several books have been published by North Koreans fleeing the country, from prison camps and lack of food, freedom and security. Their stories have been shocking and personal. Often the picture becomes very one sided and exaggerated, focused only on the extreme parts, and thorough research and accurate knowledge of the situation is very much needed. In some more neutral news there are warnings on possible nuclear weapons, changes in the economical system and of opening up of the country in a way never seen before, including news on the religious status changing on the inside, but little research has been possible. There is continually speculation in a possible reunion between the South and the North and which consequences both societies would encounter if so (www.nknews.org).

I believe my research, and further research on these topics could contribute to answer these questions, and is one of the reasons why I am writing my thesis in English, instead of my mother tongue Norwegian, so that this research will be accessible by any English speaking person. I also love the fact that I have been allowed to research such a ‘new territory’ where not too many preconceived ideas were possible before starting.

1.5 Research design and structure of thesis

My research design is modeled after an ‘exploring design’ that intends to unravel an unclear problem (Befring 2007: 32). Key words in a research design is *what*, *who*, *where* and *how*, and I have researched defector youths religious integration to a specific organization by conducting two interviews with the six High school students at the organization’s school, a book full of observations and several talks with various volunteers and workers at this place.

I decided to use field work and reading articles and books on the side because there were not enough available texts already gathered in this specific field, and because I found it most interesting and effective for my research problems. I wanted to create new information and use it and dive deep into qualitative information and understanding (Befring 2007: 34). All my research was qualitative in-depth research, not focused on statistics, but wider than I first anticipated because of, as mentioned, the lack of previous research.

As mentioned chapter 2 includes interesting theory about religious integration, children and religion. Chapter 3 is about my methods for conducting this research explaining why and how I made the choices I did. Chapter 4 presents my material with focus on the children’s own words, which I wanted to be heard. I detected some main themes I found evident in my material and structured the chapter theme based. Chapter 5 is an analysis on my material divided into themes along with theory I found useful to explain what I had seen and heard. At the end I made a conclusion over my findings along with explanation of some of the limitations to this study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical perspectives

I have found several interesting theories about religious integration which include various views on conversion, transformation and commitment. There are many theories on how the individual's religion is being shaped, from youth, through adulthood and marriage to old age, in institutions as well as in the private sphere, and different scholars have various views. I will here give an overview on some theoretical approaches I found interesting for me and my study, and elaborate in depth on theories I found especially useful for my research problem. All theories recorded here I can directly relate to the children at Durihana, how they responded and changed. The theories on how children and youth develop religion were also useful, and gave me theoretical tools to understand and measure the religious encounter the youth I have been working with are experiencing.

2.1 Concepts presented

2.1.1 IDENTITY AND RELIGION

Identity is a widely debated concept among scholars. With roots in psychology, it has connected to sociology and been under constant development (Korsnes 1997: 123-124). Bhikhu Parekh, professor in political philosophy, says that personal identity is the uniqueness of each person; their stories, bodies and their inner life of conscience, faith, thoughts and values and the way they see themselves (2008: 9). Identity is individual, but also dependent on arrangements, acknowledgement and recognition by those around us (Parekh 2008). Dahl emphasizes that our identity is socially created (2013). Identity is not one single concept. There are many group identities, and they may have national, ethnical and religious identifications. To answer the question: Who are you? most people might answer what they do, but identity is a lot more than that. Ethnicity, religion, age, interests, status and language are all little pieces of what a person's identity is made up of, and it may have a different meaning depending on who you ask (Eriksen 2004). For this study it will be especially interesting to see how identity is connected to religion and which role religion has in the society I encounter. Emile Durkheim claimed that religion will always be present because it has a necessary function in society that connects people. Religion is an expression of social commitment (McGuire 2007: 197).

2.1.2 INTEGRATION AND RELIGION

Døving states that there is little research on the relationship between integration and religious practice (2009: 122). Holliday describes various theories on integration of religion and culture. What they label as ‘mediating’, where both cultures grow together is what is hoped to be achieved, even though the person might feel like it is like living two different life styles, he or she will also experience personal growth and integration. It is most essential that the youth experience personal growth and integration to become whole, healthy people. Joining any new congregation, includes elements of change, and theories that break down what is happening are important to grasp the complexity of changing ones religion. Conversion, transformation and commitment are essential concepts to understanding cycles in a religious congregation (2010: 178). According to Stephen Warner religious communities can function as a “home away from home”, a safe haven where physical, spiritual and emotional needs are met as well as being a place of social and business networks (2005: 88).

2.1.3 THE MIGRANT

Though the people living in Durihana are labeled ‘defectors’ and ‘dissidents’, at one time being refugees, another label to name them could be migrant. Frederiks underlines that religion plays an important role in the lives of many migrants, on individual and communal level, and especially when trying to cope with the loss, separation and disorientation they have experienced, faith can provide them a vocabulary and practices to express themselves, along with structure and safety. Some studies have shown that migrants become more religiously active in their new destination country than in the previous country (2015: 186-187). Peggy Levitt claims that religion can strengthen the community when living outside their own country, being a boundary crosser (2007: 107, 111, 114). When discussing the people at Durihana I will use the terms ‘defector’ or ‘dissident’ as it is more fitting and I find that ‘migrant’ does not quite cover who they are.

2.1.4 CONVERSION

According to Encyclopedia of Religion conversion connotes an inner transformation, with the person turning around, implying a great change in his or her life. There is not a consensus on how to use the concept of conversion, instead theories emphasizing dimensions and processes of conversion with different sets of assumptions and methods of research (Sandland 2011: 14-15). Some scholars have widened the concept by using extended ones like transformation and commitment, which are concepts I

will use during my thesis to discuss my findings in Durihana. Conversion will be debated in depth in this chapter.

2.2 Various theorists and theories

2.2.1 According to **Berger and Luckmann**, religious conversion is mainly a radical socialization process, where the conversion experience is only the beginning, and the importance is placed on the fellowship resembling a family, and the conversion being conserved in a community confirming their new identity. Without this community a new identity is not able to maintain (Sandland 2011: 14-15). There is a “fundamental need for an emotional dependence upon persons holding important positions in the sub-society one is about to enter”. The core of conversion is these “significant others” which is fundamental for reconstruction of identity. Another condition for maintenance of a religious new identity is the ongoing confirmation of this. The religious community needs to provide “plausibility structures” where the conversion is being confirmed. The community family setting that confirms the new identity is the backbone to sustain an ongoing conversion (Sandland 2011: 15). As the author concludes, a conversion experience is not much if it is not continued to be taken seriously (Berger 1972). Berger and Luckmann’s focus on conversion being a radical socialization process is interesting for my research.

2.2.2 **Lonergan** focuses on moral conversion being motivated by meaning, not satisfaction (Sandland 2011: 17). It is when someone, quoting Lonergan: “comes to love God with his whole heart and his whole soul and all his mind and all his strength; and in consequence he loves his neighbors as himself” (2004: 86).

Another contemporary scholar, **Lewis R. Rambo** suggests a stage model of conversion, including cultural, social, personal and religious systems, summoned up in a seven stages model (Sandland 2011: 19). One of them have been relevant for my study, in stage two a *crisis* occur where the person or group come to question previous taken-for-granted views due to various experiences both internal and external. External could be personal contact, a family member that triggers the crisis, while internal might be illness, existential questions and the likes. This could result in reorientation that might not have happened if the crisis had not occurred, making crisis a possible catalyst for change (Sandland

2011: 19-20).

One of **Paul G. Hiebert's** important concepts concerning religious change is worldview, with an understanding that deep and radically differing worldviews underly cultures. Humans are looking for coherence between the world as we see it and the world as we experience it, searching for order, pattern and unity within these. It is important for us to make sense of our experiences, and on the surface we often do this by putting our belief system into categories, the deeper we seek, often unconsciously, we try to integrate them into a coherent structure that makes some sense out of reality (Sandland 2011: 24). The children in Durihana came with a certain worldview from North Korea and China and was introduced to a totally different one. How would this affect their religious integration?

2.3 McGuire Conversion and commitment

2.3.1 CONVERSION

McGuire states that conversion is both a conversion and a commitment process, and that both processes compel members to draw back from former ways of life and encourage them to invest themselves in the new community's values and goals. The final result of conversion is then not merely adding new members, but creating members who again invest themselves in the groups activities and faith. The commitment process then builds structures for the group's worldview and lifestyle. A search of meaning and belonging are two focuses in her study of religious conversion, which she believes are common motives for joining a new social group. Meaning is especially important because it links the individual with the religious group, attaching meaning to events is a human process, while belonging shows how the individual understands and defines him- or herself within the frames of the collective (Sandland 2011: 23-24).

Conversion in modern societies is characterized by expectation of this being an individual decision, much more than in traditional societies. Modern societies differ in their view of the individual and individual choices, while in highly traditional ones youth's belonging to the group's religion is more taken for granted, though it still may be experienced as a choice. Religious decisions is accepted to be a choice for the whole family or community (2002: 75-76).

Conversion, along with ideas, psychological factors, community, family and other interactions are

usually processes. It could be a crisis or social events that led to gradually re-socializing where their social world is being redefined. Some may come to say quotes like: “I once was blind, but now I see!” which makes them reinterpret their past, now and future and embrace a new meaning system, underlining a dramatic personal change. New converts compare their new wonderful ways of living with their previous evil or unhappy lives, and interpret past experiences as steps towards the newfound faith (McGuire 2002: 76-77, 82).

2.3.2 COMMITMENT

Most converts are included in a group by friends or relatives and are gradually re-socialized into the group’s lifestyle. Here they learn to redefine their social world, seeing the path that led them to “truth”. Part of this is learning to act, look and talk like the new group, for instance outward signs like witnessing, baptism or speaking in tongues, and getting rid of “the old self”, stripping themselves of old habits such as smoking and drinking. These rituals could be significant in itself or a matter of “going through the motions”, and promotes unity and a stronger commitment to community. Some groups separate themselves from the rest of the community, conducting their own schools or homeschooling, work place, social clubs. They may also exercise control over how much media is able to influence them. More important than the physical withdrawal is the psychic boundaries between the community and the outside world. Members are perceived as good, and ‘they’ on the outside as “evil”. Withdrawal can also entail parents, spouses or friends when the individual no longer identifies with them to the same extent, but more with the group. While withdrawing from the outside world, they are often attaching themselves closer to the group, experiencing greater oneness. The “we” feeling grows stronger by homogeneity and becomes a place where the members feel safe and experience a strong sense of unity. In some groups also possessions are shared and work is performed together. Other variants of this are nominal forms of sharing on certain given days, it could be decorating the Sunday school rooms together. Regular gatherings and meetings are needed to bring about a stronger commitment, not just for religious purpose (McGuire 2002: 81-83, 86-90).

As shown, the conversion process does not end when a convert joins a community, but is continued by a commitment process where the convert increases his or hers identification with the group and its meaning system. Some communities may be effective in recruiting, while not being as effective in the commitment process. Research has shown that converts often leave the community within few years. In

committing to a faith it requires the member to take responsibility in maintaining the group and its needs, a reciprocal relationship. Conversion alone can not solve new problems arising. Therefore the goal of the commitment process is for the converts to invest themselves in what the group believes and does, sacrificing something for the group (McGuire 2002: 84-86). “Commitment processes build plausibility structures for the group’s worldview and way of life” (McGuire 2002: 85).

2.3.3 DISENGAGEMENT

Though some members deepen their commitment to religious groups, some have an increasing disengagement. This is also a transformation process of self and meaning system where the member leaves one to go to another, and can be a problematic and emotionally tough transition, especially if the ties to the group are strong. The community’s response to the exit can be a huge influence on the process. This process involves social influence that might pull the individual gradually in different directions, and often end up with a similar re-interpretation of the past as after the conversion experience. Four stages characterizes this exit, according to McGuire: *Doubts, weighing the alternatives, turning point* and *establishing an ex-role*. External reasons could be anything from falling in love with an ex-believer, lack of movement success to incoherency between the leader’s words and actions. In this we see that both conversion and disaffiliation are active processes (2002: 91-93). Disengagement therefore does not necessarily mean leaving their faith, often it is perceived as keeping the true faith, and to move on to a more pure ideology and practice (McGuire 2002: 95). McGuire’s theories connecting childhood and religion as well as detailed analysis of the conversion as a two-folded process; conversion and commitment apply directly to my research at the community of Durihana, in many ways resembling a family. The part on disengagement is also important since two of the boys I interviewed left Durihana during and shortly after my research. While analyzing my material with this in mind, I used the theories of disengagement to look for signs and clues to understand their exit later on.

2.3.4 CHILDHOOD AND RELIGION

McGuire underlines that systems with a homogeneous meaning system usually have members where the worldview is taken for granted. When going a bit more in depth in her theories about a child’s specific development of a religious identity, she says that a child needs a sense of belonging to a group where the meaning system can grow. Early childhood is the most critical time for developing religion

(2002: 58, 61). One study found that family roles are important factors in the child shaping images of God, where God was identified the same as their parents such as authoritative, nurturing, forgiving, angry, wise and so on. The child learns what it means to be “one of us”, and who “the others” are, and the religion and identity become intertwined. This self-identity is the meaning and interpretation which a person understands questions such as: Who am I? with the answer that “this is where I belong” (McGuire 2002: 58-60).

2.3.5 FORMING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY WITHIN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Decisions to be involved in religious activity could even be an interdependent one, seeing it as a collective good for the family. The family can become more than part of religious socialization, in itself it is a primary religious group (McGuire 2002: 61).

When describing the community as a source of religious identity forming McGuire means the individual's belonging to a certain group such as tribe, nation, ethnic group. Gradually the child is socialized into this religious community. It starts with the taken-for-granted parts of membership and develops into identification with the group, such as “I am a Catholic”. Here identity seems to be strongly linked with the notion of “us” and the multiple “others”. The communities provide a sense of belonging and foundation for the identity, maintaining it or changing it, also being the basis for the group's entire meaning system. But also in this there are choices, some are immersed in the network's beliefs and identity, while others detach themselves from the bonds, looking for identity elsewhere, which can be a painful and problematic process. In a pluralistic context the individual is also free to pick and choose elements from different cultures they are part of to construct a picture of who they are. The connection of these ethnic and religious elements function as culturally plausible myths - stories from where the individual lives, which helps us understand the special role of ethnic congregations in the lives of the new immigrants. McGuire asks the question if religious congregations serve different functions for new immigrants than for people that have been living there for generations (2002: 62-63, 66).

2.3.6 ADOLESCENCE AND RELIGION

In adolescence the transition to adulthood can be a critical transformation. In childhood identity and group belonging is established, but adolescence means that responsibility, knowledge, ritual, and

acceptance into adult circles are vowed into the identity. When the child grows into adolescence it is natural to see three phases take place; *separation*, *marginality* and *aggregation*, where the marginality phase symbolizes ambiguity where previously taken-for-granted roles and relationships suddenly are questioned or criticized by the youth. Adolescence is often marked by identity crisis and religious rebellion, preparing the youth for adulthood, arguing their religious identity with parents and religious leaders (McGuire 2002: 68-69).

The theories presented in this chapter have given me a backdrop to understand the experiences I had and the material I collected at Durihana. The theories on childhood and religion gave me a foundation to understand them and the important religious identity process they were undergoing.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Choosing a method for the research depends on the research problem and what kind of data you want to find. In an assignment like mine, where the material has to be created, a qualitative research method is necessary to approach the field. This means using constructed methods, not only collecting observation and description of a situation, but interpreting this information. To be an objective student is close to impossible in social studies, because studying people is studying something you yourself are a part of, which social studies has received much criticism for. Being aware of your own role in this particular kind of research is necessary (Hammersley 2004: 51-52).

A research applying qualitative method is looking behind the numbers and common perceptions to find the story behind and its unique examples. The researcher's goal is to detect human attitudes, opinions, the way they view themselves and their behavior patterns. The most common way is to take use of observation and interviews of research objects and informants. Usually the researcher is free to take independent choices concerning the research and dynamically and informally enact with the informants. This makes it hard to check and verify the results of qualitative research, and personal integrity for the researcher becomes highly important (Befring 2007: 29-32). In my research situation I found myself searching for 'evidence' of religious integration that could underline and tell a correct story of the place I was in. Much of this became clear through my many observations, what the informants did and said, or did not say and do, and I was able to get some understanding of what they thought and felt about the environment they were in. In addition, to understand on a deeper level, the interviews also told stories that underlined or deviated from what I had observed and in some cases explained the observations. I had the opportunity to hear what they, in their own words, said about religious integration, their beliefs and ideals. To understand the very rare situation they were in, volunteers and leaders helped me understand the background of what I was seeing and hearing, what could be trusted or not, and the various views the different workers had was in itself interesting.

3.2 Research situation

Before I decided on a specific research problem, I was looking for an environment to study, which is

common. The researcher usually works within one environment, and it is crucial to find guard keepers that can give you access to the environment and cover some of the expenses, like living or travel. Then you can choose to visit the area in secret or tell them beforehand of your intentions. The people in position to open and close doors can be difficult to identify. In some cases it is clear beforehand who they are and how to relate to them, while other times it can take time to discover (Hammersley 2004: 66-68, 93).

I decided on Durihana because I wanted to see defectors in not only a church setting, and a school system appeared more varied to study. In a church it is to be expected that the focus will be on religion, but that would not necessarily be the case in a school. I had help from several guard keepers to be allowed into this specific organization, who had experienced much media interest and others harming and criticizing them. I befriended a South Korean pastor when living in Hawaii, who were close friends with the leader and founder of Durihana. Because of our relationship and him recommending me, there was immediate trust, which is typical of Korean relationship building, and I was given free access to live and stay with them for twelve days and because they then that saw my intentions and genuine interest in the children and youth, they allowed me to come back and do my research.

3.3 Guard keepers

The incident with Samonim

Before describing the informants and interviews that took place, I want to include an incident with the pastor's wife, Samonim as an introduction to my findings. It explains well who the people in Durihana are, and how things are done. Some guard keepers have the authority to block access (Hammersley 2004: 93). I experienced during the middle of my research such an incident. One of the North Korean boys came to my dorm, which is prohibited for all boys, and said he was able to do an interview. I was shocked that this very shy boy would even dare to approach me in my room, let alone end up sitting on my bed watching pictures on my computer. 15 minutes later we went downstairs to the established "interview room", where Samonim soon entered, without knocking, and let him know harshly he had to be in choir practice (which I did not understand, because it was in Korean). For the first time I saw him disobeying her, staying with me another 15 minutes before the translator came and the interview started. A few days earlier during lunch I was teaching English one-on-one to another one of the interviewees, and Samonim looked through the window and saw us. Not long after this second incident

she interrupted an interview and wanted to talk to me, through the translator. She stated, in a polite, but cross way, according to the translator, that I could not do interviews if I was interfering with the students mandatory obligations. She was clearly upset. The translator shared this with me, and went to Samonim the next day and told her it was all a misunderstanding. She listened and seemed very pleased I was teaching English during the break. Her attitude changed. Looking back this could easily have led to a break in trust, and closed the door for further research.

3.4 Informants

I had on beforehand decided to interview some at the center. But who to interview? In some cases people in the environment will ask to be interviewed, or propose which ones. It is not always easy to find and contact the different informants (Hammersley 2004: 159, 161). For me, it was not until after teaching Middle school and High school, and talking more to the adults living there, I decided to interview the High school class of six students, four girls and two boys at the age of 15-18. There are many reasons why. I assumed they might be more reflective and mature than the Primary- and Middle school kids, able to reflect on a deeper level on their situation and experiences. They were also the ones I felt the closest connection with, partly because I have always connected well with youth which prompted me to become a teacher in the first place, and having taught them English early on I already had a beginning relationship with them. Within this little group I identified different kinds of informants; informants that could be very sensitive to the actual themes, informants that were new, the frustrated informant willing to expose more than others, and informants with a need to talk, wanting attention and support (Hammersley 2004: 163-164).

The High school students also naturally intrigued me, more than the young kids or the group of older people living there. Two of the High schoolers had fled without close family and I wanted to know their stories, and how it was like to come with no or little faith background and be exposed to such a strong Christian environment. The other four were born in North Korea and China, but all of them grew up in China with one or both of their parents in hiding, which made them take risky choices, leaving the children with grandparents or at orphanages to look for work for themselves in South Korea. Some of the youth had grown up not able to communicate much with their mothers since they learned Chinese and their mothers had married Chinese men, but only spoke Korean. And then eventually they all managed to escape to South Korea, but also, I supposed, had had little interaction with churches or

other religions.

For some of my informants it was years since they had escaped and they knew little about their parents' past. They all came from a cultural background where asking questions many times were prohibited and reflection was not encouraged.

3.5 Observations

Before I arrived Durihana for the second time in January 2015 I decided to have a strictly observant role in the beginning, to the extent that the children did not know what I was there for, besides teaching English. Due to knowledge and experience on North and South Korea, I made an assumption on beforehand that turned out to be right that many of my findings would come through observing, and that interviewing the children alone would not give me an adequate answer. This was based on me not speaking the language, most of them not speaking English and the knowledge of the Korean culture. Since Korea is a high context society (explained later) and the organization is lead by an older man in his 60's, I assumed they had a culture of not "talking openly or negatively about each other to outsiders", and I believed my most important findings might therefore come through what was talked about in the hallway or observed while them not noticing, as well as casual and even accidental conversations with students, teachers and volunteers. I therefore spent much time observing the youth and volunteers, being as much a 'fly on the wall' as possible. After a while I started talking more to them, and they became gradually aware of why I was there.

3.6 The interviews

When I started tutoring two of the boys and talk a little to them (mostly on my initiative), I started to build some relationships also. In this I was constantly aware of the distance – closeness aspect, wondering how it could affect what they said during the interviews. After two and a half weeks there I received consent from all the High school students and started the interviews. My plan was to finish within two weeks, but during the first interview I realized that a one hour interview would not cover all my questions and give them enough room to speak freely. My Korean translator Janet (who was a volunteer there) and I discussed and decided to do two one-hour interviews with each of the six students, becoming all together 12 interviews of about 45 minutes to one hour each. We used a separate

room in the basement next to the cafeteria used for teaching during the day. Most of the interviews took place during the night, while others were in the afternoon. Sometimes dinner would be going on at the same time and we would be interrupted, but for most of the time we had the room all to ourselves. The translator and I seated ourselves to the right and left of the informant, trying to make the situation as effortless as possible, not giving the interviewee an appearance that he or she was under 'surveillance'. I also brought drinks and snacks and tried to explain important information on beforehand. Interviewing children together with another adult I was constantly aware of the vulnerable situation they were in, and I tried not to push them too much or step over any boundaries they might have.

What people says tells us a lot about their perspective and the cultures and sub-cultures they belong to. To understand their story and its context, the reasons behind and who it is addressed to and why, will easier make us determine whether an informant suffers inaccuracies or not. Also clothes, gestures and behavior can determine a great deal about a person, their social status, gender, attitudes, work role and so forth. It must all be analyzed within the context it appears in (Hammersley 2004: 151-153, 157). For me all the observation and background information proved to be very helpful while interviewing. I also tried to read the informants at all times during the interview – like the tone of their voice, wandering eyes, avoiding my eyes. I tried to read between the lines which attitudes they had towards Christianity and living in Durihana, and come at it from different angles to see if I would get different answers. One of the boys were always immaculately dressed, sat in an upright position and had a long introduction to each answer, giving me the impression that his answers were well thought through, and that he had important information to share. During the interviews I saw some of their attitudes change, I detected embarrassment and fear, openness, but also unwillingness to talk. With one informant I first used Janet, but when I did not get fulfilling information I tried the second interview with Kayla, the Chinese speaking translator, a friend of mine. Interesting enough, that made the informant close up even more.

There is a difference in standardized and reflective interviews, and the method could be leading or not-leading, and usually the researcher will use different types as he or she sees fit throughout the interview. Normally these interviews are more alike conversations than a questionnaire (Hammersley 2004: 177). I had beforehand prepared an interview guide of about 20 questions that were well thought through to get the answers I wanted for my research problem. I followed them most of the time, but in different order, and sometimes asked some of the questions a second time later in the interview or in

the second interview if an answer had not provided satisfying information. The first questions were usually always the least ‘intimidating’ and easy to answer, and in a way “get them going”. I would sometimes start with a very open and broad question like, “how was growing up in North Korea?”, so the informant freely could speak about many areas related to the question. I would sense whether or not, and when the informant was ready to go deeper, depending on answer, attitude and body language and try as much as possible to lead the interview in a natural way. In that sense the interviews were semi-structured, with a plan, but open to change during the natural flow of the interview. When one of informants took the interview into a totally different direction, breaking down and crying, the translator and I communicated without words and decided to let it happen, continuing the interview more like a counseling session. Similar events took place in several of the interviews, and with my background as a teacher and counselor I felt I could lead the informants through the processes in a safe and reassuring way, though it always caught me off guard and shook me. Later on we would check up on the informants and make sure they were okay.

It also felt natural to research their cultural background and question them on whether they were integrated into the South Korean society, their new home country. This is an entirely different thesis, but to understand Durihana, the culture and religious life there, is impossible if not put in context with the society as a whole, and the understanding of their previous experiences from North Korea and China. As a researcher I was warned to ask leading questions, and though I did use many leading questions, I tried to be conscious about to who and when I did it, and aware that it may give me different information. I used as much as I had learned about methods when observing and researching, while the theoretical part first came afterwards. I had read some theories on religion and religious youth today that I kept in the back of my mind, but to dive into the theories and find out which I could use for my research proved to be too hard and too much to do at the same time. I had to come back to it on a later stage and then have the research material in the back of my mind, getting an overview and understanding of what theoretically did and did not happen at Durihana (Hammersley 2004: 180).

3.7 Methods for the analysis of the material

After my field research I transcribed the recordings of the 12 interviews into written text. I spent a lot of time doing this, transcribing as literal as possible, wanting everything to be accurate, since I believed elements that might not seem important at that time, could be in the analyzing process later on. Then I

spent time going through all my material, created and used various codes to identify themes and statements before trying to categorize my findings, labeling them and putting them into a diagram. Afterwards I analyzed and interpreted the material I had acquired as far as I could before re-reading theory from chapter 2 and seeing my findings in light of it. At all times I tried to let my research problem lead me, though it also kept changing form. I have chosen a hermeneutical approach to the material, trying to recognize meaning in what the informants said and did with a goal of understanding them.

3.8 My role as a researcher

To have knowledge and skills outside the research can also come in handy (Hammersley 2004: 117). While living among the girls in the girls dorm, I offered to teach English. They very much appreciated me helping, and I taught classes as well as High school students one-on-one. This allowed me to get to know them better, as well as the teachers, both parts providing good information and relationship over time. Therefore my role was mixed, in the beginning I was just their teacher, before becoming the interviewer as well with time.

The role of a field researcher in this foreign environment can be a challenge, emotionally and personally, often described as 'culture shock', where the researcher experience alienation and needs to find out how to handle it. The first week there, teaching classes, I spent most my time observing and taking notes. I did not talk much to the teachers and students, it was both planned and happened natural that way, since none of them were interested in talking to me. It was as if I did not exist. One reason may have been that I could not speak Korean, but even in the settings where no language was used; games, meals, invitation to church and so forth, it was like I was air to them. For the research it was excellent, because I could get accurate observation of how they acted and mingled without my presence effecting them much. But it was also surprisingly painful, I felt rejected and lonely with at times a desperate need to be seen or being 'someone'. This created a lot of emotional stress. Hammersley uses the expression to be 'acceptably incompetent', and I struggled to accept my role as an incompetent outsider (2004: 129-130, 131).

I had decided to be an 'observant participant' as a teacher, but as close to 'fully observant' outside the classroom as possible before I started interviewing. Literally being treated as a 'fly on the wall' I could

freely observe them in all kinds of settings; at meals, school, in the breaks, at services, during choir practice, in the hallway, visiting the office, outdoors playing with each other, in the dormitories, without them changing behavior when I was around. I sat with my book in the back and wrote down everything I could think of; body language, what I saw happening, the surroundings, actions between leaders and children and between the children themselves, children and visitors. I wrote down clothing and what they carried in their backpacks and what they ate, no observation was too small. In the beginning there was a lot to write. During the second week I started to write down reflections and thoughts about my role, and as the weeks passed by, I felt I was repeating myself and did not have many 'new' observations to write.

After three to four weeks I started to draw very simple conclusions, and wrote down my observations of the interviews and talks I had with teachers and volunteers, which I was developing a natural relationship with. Outsiders and insiders will naturally have access to different kind of information (Hammersley 2004: 137). In my experience I was a total outsider to the students, but becoming an insider with the volunteers and teachers. There were especially three volunteers and one teacher that provided good insight to what was going on, also beneath the surface.

Feeling detached and on the outside characterized much of my research experience at Durihana, and I was glad I had read about it on beforehand. It is normal that stress occurs while having mixed social roles, having to keep neutrality in a way that serves the research, and constantly being aware of ethics. As a researcher you will always have to hold back some, not feeling at home, a social and intellectual distance which creates a room for the research to be carried out in (Hammersley 2004: 140, 142). I was clearly never one of them, and if I was noticed, it was as just as another visitor, which they have had plenty of. They were polite and always bowed or greeted me when they noticed me, but then quickly returned to the task they were doing or the people they were with.

My role was challenged several times when the children would break down and cry during the interviews, or they had questions where they were interested in my specific opinion as mentioned in 3.6. Janet and I would look at each other at each time, and chose to follow where the children would lead us. Once we spent time explaining our perception of forgiveness in a way we thought the interviewee could understand and then led her in a session where we went through forgiveness and

inner healing. I felt highly unconventional doing this, wondering if it was even right, but decided on the spot that I saw a huge need that I thought I knew how to solve. It felt more wrong not to do what I saw needed, than to step outside my role. Similar incidents happened where some of the other interviews went off track. When De complained about all the services and all the 'things they had to do' that he could not find meaning in, we spent much time, Kayla and I, sharing a Gospel that also included grace and mercy and not only 'living by works'. We told about our Christian communities where openness was natural and praying and talking about God could happen in a cafe just as much as in a church. He listened very attentively and him asking questions indicated that this was teaching he was unused to, but wanted to hear.

Concerning my role I was very surprised by some of my own reactions and emotions. One day I would be convinced everyone was being well integrated both socially and religiously, but the next day I would be highly sceptic and critical of all I saw and heard. My emotions and opinions kept changing day by day, often going into various extremes. I was the most surprised at how difficult I experienced the field work, how vulnerable I felt and how much I longed to be one of them. Towards the end my role changed to some extent, the children in general seemed to warm up some, maybe trusting me to be around for a while and that is one of the reasons why leaving was hard. I finally felt they noticed me being there and were happy about it. Some of the interviewees that I had come to know better were very sad to see me leave, and the boy I had tutored for weeks was very upset and crying.

3.9 Ethical issues

The ethical side of this was a different aspect. The research problems I decided on contained much observation of the children and also various workers at Durihana. Would it make a difference if it was hidden or open? The researcher has to live with the ethical choices taken, concern and possibly practical challenges, for instance when the children get older and hear what they have been a part of. An important point here could be to not focus on whether or not the researcher is allowed to conduct research, but what is said to the people involved. I tried to clarify most of what I did with the leaders, though the children observed did not have full access to this information (Hammersley 2004: 100-101). One of the ethical issues I came across is described above in the incident with Samonim. I was aware that she at times was skeptical to what I was doing and why I used so much time with the children. The ethical challenge in this was the feeling of 'feasting on their hospitality', fearing at times that I was

stretching it a bit too far, and I asked myself questions on when I would cross a line of taking advantage of them, which I did not want to. In a reciprocal relationship there is always a give and take, and since my teaching classes in the school had stopped after two-three weeks (and I was only tutoring one child one-on-one) I was not really volunteering and helping them, and my interaction with them was mainly for the benefit of my research. Not speaking the language, and not being asked to help at church, I felt that I did not have much to give back while taking so much of their time, adding to living and eating there. This was difficult since I did not want to be 'one of those' taking advantage of them and then leaving them behind.

Another moral issue has come up while analyzing the material and writing it down in this thesis. Korea is a high-context culture (explained later) where losing face can be problematic. Some of my material did not necessarily put Durihana or the leaders in a good light. Suddenly understanding the writer of "The bookseller of Kabul," Aasne Seierstad better, not to mention the bookseller himself, what a delicate situation I was in, having been invited with open arms to eat and live with them, was an ethical issue more and more on my mind. How would my writings be perceived by Durihana, if read? Would they agree, or at least understand my findings? And how could a thesis written by a Western mind ever comprehend what was going on in this totally foreign culture? Was it even right of me to look for "truth", if there was any?

The last moral issue I will mention here is the feelings I had in dealing with children. There was no need to remind me, I was at all times aware of their vulnerability in many areas, being little and at the same time former refugees, entering a foreign country and living mostly without their parents in it. The interviews with them were very different than my talks with the adult volunteers and teachers. I was concerned they could feel manipulated and forced, and I often wondered how them opening up about such sensitive areas of their lives would feel, since they were so young, had possibly not talked about this before, and might not have the language or maturity to process what was brought up. In this it became important for me to show love and care, using words and emotions and time to show that I understood and cared and did not want to exploit them.

3.10 Reliability, validity, generalization

I altered all the names, and tried to disguise who the children and volunteers were, at times leaving out

information that might put them in a difficult situation. The theories used in this research and in analyzing the material, was childhood and adolescence theories by Meredith McGuire, as well as some of her theories on religious conversion and commitment, and various theories on conversion from Rambo, Berger and Luckman, Lonergan and Hiebert. Durihana has never been studied before, and to my knowledge no other Christian organization or church that receives North Korean defectors either, therefore my material can not be compared to any other, or seen as a development to previous research on similar topic. But my research corresponds to research made on North Korean defectors, and do not divert from earlier findings. Observing, interviewing and talking to various people in different positions in Durihana over longer periods, often discussing the same issues over and over with various volunteers, new and experienced, making sure that what I saw could be verified in their opinion, makes my findings more reliable, I believe.

Chapter 4: Presentation of data

Before analyzing my material in chapter five, I will here give a presentation of the most important data I created during my research. In this part I want the material to speak for itself, believing the children's own words and the teachers' and volunteers' insights are the most important findings. Several children express themselves on each theme, and if contradictory on any, both views are included. I have chosen to put weight on my observations, and have used them actively as data, presenting and interpreting them to the best of my abilities.

Description of the informants

On the Durihana center I identified three distinct groups that lived there full time. The first group I call 'the first wave'. These are the first North Koreans from the early 2000's that came as young teenagers without parents and are now adults. Some of them have married and stay at home or study or work in South Korea, while a few are single and live in the dorms in Durihana. A couple of them there study while a few has not had success studying or finding a job and help out with the children and cooking in Durihana.

I was told from the volunteers that the pastor has not seen the change in faith and lifestyle he hoped for in the first wave, and that is one of the reasons he has been opening Durihana to defector *children*, and an increasing number of children from North Korea and China are coming. These groups, the second and third, I call 'the second wave' and they started to arrive 3-4 years ago and consists of two groups where some are orphans while others came with one or two parents - North Korean children and Chinese North Korean children, the latter having North Korean parents or a North Korean mother and a Chinese father while living part or their whole lives in China in hiding. Due to being paperless these have never been formally Chinese, and are now South Korean inhabitants. The three groups, and in particular the North Koreans and the Chinese North Koreans are groups with distinct differences, such as size, behavior and language, which would be interesting to study. My study is mainly about the second wave, though I lived with girls from the first wave also and had many conversations with them. If necessary I distinguished between the North Korean and Chinese North Korean youth groups, and have otherwise chosen to view them as one group of North Korean dissidents. This is because I believe my research would become too wide and long for the set framework, I simply did not have space or

time enough to go into details about the differences and study the Chinese background such as history and religion. Also, I do not believe my research portrays the groups reacting differently to Durihana and religion, and the results of my research has not been affected by the differences. From this group I interviewed two boys and four girls.

Other informants were teachers and volunteers which I had several discussions with while working together, during meals and going out for coffee. I have also included quotes from the pastor made from the pulpit during services.

	Children in High School	Information		Adults	Role	Information
1	Kong	Age: 16, male. In Durihana: 1-2 years	1	Janet	Korean translator, teacher and assistant of pastor Chang	Korean Western
2	Kyung-mi	Age: 15, female. In Durihana: 1 year.	2	Miss Han	Teacher in Durihana	Korean
3	Kang-dae	Age: 18, male. In Durihana: 6 months, his second time.	3	Pastor Chang	Pastor and leader of Durihana	Korean
4	Kaia	Age: 15, female. In Durihana: 2-3 years.	4	Samonim	Wife of pastor Chang, leader of school	Korean
5	Jia	Age: 16, female. In Durihana: 1-2 years.	5	Kayla	Chinese translator	American
6	De	Age: 15, male. In Durihana: 6 months.	6	Pastor Park	Volunteer speaker, friend of pastor Chang	Korean American
			7	Mark	Volunteer assistant of pastor Chang	European

Appendix 1

All names are altered.

Description of Durihana

Durihana is a Christian organization working to help North Koreans escape from their country. It was

founded by pastor Chang in 1999 and started with Monday night prayer meetings for North Korea and North Koreans and their specific situation, and grew into a missions oriented organization focused on helping them escape. So far they have rescued over 800 North Koreans, by sending pastor Chang and other workers at Durihana to China and countries surrounding it, to bring them to South Korea and help them integrate into Durihana and South Korean society (www.durihana.net).

Pastor Chang practically grew up in church with a devout mother, but turned away from his faith in his teens and became a successful businessman. Decades later he returned to faith and became a pastor and rescuer of North Koreans. He hopes the children will grow up and have a faith of their own and is more concerned with teaching them a Christian lifestyle. This Christian lifestyle emphasizes “being a right Christian higher than a good citizen”. His hope is that faith will follow as a result, like it did with himself, if not now then hopefully later on in life (Janet).

Durihana is a donation-based organization, and supported by large companies like tv mogul KBS and Samsung, and it has received national and international attention. Some of the defectors’ stories are filmed or put into writing and are on display on their internet site. Many of the children have been interviewed by newspapers and other media. Durihana is also a school and a church (Janet). The school established in 2012 a choir, called *Hullabaloo choir*, which means ‘uproar’ and ‘disturbance’ (www.dictionary.com) with an expressed purpose of helping ‘their emotional stability’. On Durihana’s site you can read stories of the children’s performances with the choir, for instance on South Korea’s largest newspaper’s Chosun Ilbo’s 95th Anniversary and KBS’s 42nd Anniversary, which I was fortunate to attend, as well as stories of their rescue missions. Pastor Chang speaks and teaches about the defectors and the North Korean situation in South Korea as well as internationally. One of the results of this is that the State of Colorado proclaimed July 17th to be ‘Durihana day’ (www.durihana.net). His rescue trips to China has resulted in National Geographic writing an article about them in 2009 (ngm.nationalgeographic.com) as well as a documentary being made at the moment.

Religious fundament

On the headings of Durihana’s website three Bible scriptures are written, which give an indication to the motivation of the organization. One of them are from Isaiah 1:17b in the Bible: “Cheer them up.

Stand up in court for children whose fathers have died. And do the same thing for widows.” (NIRV). The defectors are these children without fathers and women without husbands. Another quote says: “Christ himself is our peace. He has made Jews and non-Jews into one group of people” (free translation NLT version). Pastor Chang referred to the Israelites many times during his sermons, for instance for the congregation to learn from the mistakes of the Israelites. This made me believe he compares the defectors to the Israelites of the Bible, which the children confirmed using similar associations during the interviews. This could be a study of its own.

Durihana school and church

When the first North Koreans arrived pastor Chang realized they needed more than rescuing, and set up a small school that started with about five children that grew into an alternative South Korean school for North Korean defector children (www.durihana.net). This has developed into about 30 students from 1st grade to High school age, three more floors used for church, dormitory and offices and two floors in another building with school and dormitory for boys. Outside the school is a large park where the children spend a lot of their free time, not supervised.

Durihana is an organization that also includes a church. The Monday night prayer meeting focused on defectors from North Korea has continued through the years and grown into a church service, one of 12 services a week with seven prayer meetings 5.30 in the morning and five other services.

4.1 Previous religious experiences

In the beginning of each interview I asked my informants several questions about their background and previous religious experiences to learn more about their faith and to be able to understand their former religious experience or lack of it. Two of them described a limited experience with Christianity, one of them explaining that her family hid a Bible and considered themselves Christians secretly while the other one heard Bible stories from a young age, but both of them claimed that they did not learn what it meant to be a Christian until entering Durihana. The other four informants said that religion in North Korea is not existing, and hidden in China, and they had barely any knowledge of it growing up. One remembered seeing an altar where they came to offer food to the forefathers, and one remembered seeing images of Buddha on TV. Two of them said that sometimes they would sigh and look up into the sky, or clasp their hands together and wish for something, and that was the only religious experience

they had. All together from what they told me I believed their previous affiliation with religion and Christianity was minimal.

4.2 Community life in Durihana

One of my first observations in Durihana was how the children interacted in between themselves and with the leaders. They were talking and playing with each other across the generations, and this made me curious to hear them explain their thoughts and feelings in their own words on how it was like to live together in community.

4.2.1 LIVING LIFE TOGETHER

While observing the children I saw the same people being together all the time - grown ups, teachers, children. Somehow it seemed like time was standing still. The children and adults often hugged each other and the children were affectionate in their play. I observed Samonim interacting with the children many times during the day, also in school. Everybody helped everybody during the meal times, the babies were doted on and the elderly helped and bowed to. The older boys helped the younger boys. No one sat alone. I very quickly thought they resembled the normal life of an extended family and it was unlike my experiences visiting other orphanages in South Korea, Thailand, Philippines and Colombia. My translator Kayla exclaimed on the first day entering: “This does not feel like an orphanage or like former refugees. These kids all seem normal!” She had worked in an orphanage in China for two years and seen children sitting with wet diapers all day, apathic children without normal motor skills for the age they were. Both our experiences with children at other orphanages were that many of the children there often did not ‘seem normal’. Though there could be many reasons why, it was natural for us to assume it could mean that the children at Durihana were well fed, were surrounded with adults that took good physical care of them which led them to develop healthily.

One time I came home from the subway they were having gymnastics outside, playing softball. Afterwards the teacher made them walk home on their hands and knees as a result of something they had done. They were joking with each other and laughing. It was some sight seeing 30 kids walking home from the park on their hands and knees. It was not until my research ended I thought about the fact that in the six weeks there I had hardly heard any of the children crying, even the little ones at ages six to eight. The atmosphere I experienced very safe and I immediately felt trust.

4.2.2 COMMUNITY VERSUS INDIVIDUAL

Staying together in community was something several mentioned being focused on by the teachers and leaders. Kyung-mi told me her opinion on this: “Since we are a group of people, we should all be one mind and I shouldn’t act independently. I need to conform and be a good member of the group and do my best in my role here”. Others expressed that they should always think about the other children’s feelings and not upset them. If they felt like acting in a certain way and it was not good for the others, they should try not to do it.

The only one who spoke about what he thought was best for himself, was De, the youngest. “I try to fight to be myself, because I’m the only me in the world. So I think about myself, whenever I have an issue, to find out how to fix it.” He communicated that he only thought about himself and what was best for himself and that his parents endorsed him in this, encouraging his individualistic thinking.

4.2.3 THE CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Some informants were reluctant to share when asked about their lives in Durihana and how they were doing there. They would linger their answers or answer very shortly. There could be various reasons for this. It is possible they did not know how to express how they were doing, or that they did not want to reveal their feelings to us. One kept saying that he did not know how he was doing, when asked if he had anything negative to say, he did not want to answer, but was also reluctant to elaborate when asked about anything positive. When asked about friends and close relationships with the leaders he said that he had none, neither friends his age, nor a good relationship with leaders or teachers resembling uncles and aunts (a natural term in Korean society) (Kang-dae).

Several of the children said they were happy. “It is all good here. I like it. I’m happy here” (Kong). Another one said: “There are a lot of children here and I have made good friends. I am very happy here” (Kyung-mi). Several of them talked expressively about the joy they experienced living at Durihana, and the other children around them were a specific reason to why they were doing well at the center. They also mentioned learning new things and being allowed to perform and travel as reasons to their well-being.

4.2.4 EMOTIONS IN DURIHANA

Some of the children expressed that they at times struggled, while with others the loneliness was just an overall impression I had. I was wondering if some of them were aware of it or unable to fully express it. The children would voice it, saying “when things are hard...” Another friend of mine, visiting one Sunday, said that they looked good, but seemed sad. In one way it was very understandable, not living with or having their immediate family there, and having left their home country for another one, while on the other hand they were in a loving and safe environment with people and other children around constantly. Since I heard and saw little consoling and crying I wondered if there was room to be open about their feelings of sadness, loss and loneliness. Janet told me that there had been counselors at Durihana talking to a few of the children, but in her opinion it was not near enough to adequately help the children with their emotional needs.

Hearing them talk about ‘hard times’ and seeing two of them heavily crying during the interviews showed me there were emotional needs that were not properly met. Some said they thought a lot about their families, those that did not have a Christian faith, or uncertainty around their whereabouts in North Korea, and whether or not they were still alive. One girl said she longed for her family in North Korea, those that she had never met. They told me they worried about them and prayed for them.

Kaia also expressed a need to talk. “I want to share, I have lots of stories, but no one to listen to them so I end up hiding them in my mind. After I came to Korea I started to cry a lot, I would cry about little things, but this upset the other children and they were asking why I was crying all the time, so I try to not do it any more.” Several times speaking about this she repeated the phrase “I should not cry...” indicating that she wanted to cry, but felt that it was not fully accepted.

4.3 Life impact

Several children said that their lives had changed during their interviews. They expressed what they were learning and that they had grown in different areas: “I get to sing in the choir, we do a lot of performances, we go to movies and travel a lot and there’s no time to get bored. I really want to do my best here, we do a lot of different activities so we learn which ones we are good at and those we are not so good at so we get to know our interests. Before I never liked standing in front of people, I got so embarrassed. But here we have many opportunities to do that. We know each other well so we’re more

comfortable and I've become more confident in doing those things." Having the possibility to sing in a choir and travel may not be much of a life change to most teenagers, but these children had never had any experiences resembling these neither in North Korea or China. The experiences had a tremendous impact on them, a whole new world was opened up with possibilities they had never previous thought of. Kaia was very excited about this and went on to describe how learning and growing had affected her: "You know how people should have deeper thoughts as they get older and get more mature? That is what is happening to me and I'm really glad" (Kaia).

Another girl her age described how she had been emotionally impacted while living in Durihana: "There has been a big change in my life. I used to be angry all the time because my emotional health wasn't good, I am not anymore" (Jia).

4.3.1 BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

When describing this major life change several of them would immediately describe a behavioral change: "I now will humble myself and put others up. Before I would put myself out there, I wanted to be praised, I would brag about the good things about myself" (Kyung-mi).

Even the informant who struggled to describe whether he liked living there or not had specific experiences of his behavior changing: "I think I might have become a bit more diligent, I do less bad behavior and bad actions." He also wanted to change more: "I'd like to learn to control my temper and to take initiative when I don't even want to do something" (Kang-dae). He was clearly trying. The change they had experienced was by everyone interpreted as positive, a 'before and now' experience, insinuating that the changes in beliefs and actions were good.

4.4 Relationship with adults and peers

I wanted to find out how close the children were to the adults and their peers to find out if they were experiencing belonging, if they learned social skills and how to adapt to others, and if they had friends and adults that could resemble family, and replacement for parents and siblings in this place. I believed their relationship with them would also say something about religious integration, if they for instance valued the pastor and what he taught them, I believed there would be a good chance they had adapted some of what he had taught them. I also wanted to hear if they were able to share and reflect about

what was good and challenging in these relationships, if the relationships were open and honest, and why they believed a relationship was good or not.

4.4.1 ROLEMODELS

Miss Han explained to me that the children in Durihana with one or two parents alive, mostly have a weak bond with them because they did not have much contact with them while growing up or due to the parents' own problems and strive to survive in South Korea. "The children don't feel close to them," she said, "and they share things with me that they would not share with their parents." During the day there were always many adults present at Durihana and the children looked up to the leaders and the older boys and girls. I once observed a leader starting to carry wood blocks from one place to another. Immediately several boys gathered around and helped him carry without being asked. I often observed leaders in one-on-one conversations with the youth during the day, in church service or after meetings. The children all spoke of the leaders faith and attempts in rescuing and helping North Korean dissidents, and how they admired that.

One of the boys that were often the focus on the center because of playing lead role in dramas and co-leading worship at church, and also due to outstanding behavior had his dorm boss as a role model: "My former dorm boss was a role model to me and helped me a lot in my study and faith goals. I miss him a lot. He told me how to put my heart into the things I do. Before I would not really care, but he helped and guided me. So now whenever I do something I think about putting more intentionality into it" (Kong).

Janet and the other volunteers and teachers sometimes called Kong the 'golden child' and told me he was a role model for all the other children. They would nod their heads towards him and tell me "he's good". The explanation to why was that he was outgoing, straightforward and also had a strong faith in God. One of the children said they admired him for his diligence and gentleness (Kyung-mi).

4.4.2 RELATIONS WITH PEERS AND LEADERS

The children in Durihana are in a unique situation since they live in dorms with other children at all times, and not being supervised by adults. When we asked Kong about his relationship with the other

boys and girls he explained the relationships like this: “I am close with a few boys and girls. Sometimes we fight. But after we fight, we laugh.”

“I can talk to anybody and I am really happy to make new friends with adults and students alike. I have a broad relationship with so many people. I really like that.” Kaia expressed joy about meeting Americans that she still kept in touch with and learning how to be friends with adults as well as those the same age as herself. Five of six talked about their best friend in Durihana, though several voiced frustrations and conflicts over their peers on different thinking, background, way of studying and communicating. Especially the girls could share several stories on different conflicts they were experiencing between the girls, while the boys said the middle school children fought a lot. The only one that did not voice deep friendship was Kang-dae: “I don't have anyone to talk to, no brother or someone that feels like an uncle.”

Kang-dae had good things to say about the leaders: “I like all the teachers, I admire and respect them. I admire the pastor.” But for Kyung-mi it was more personal: “Our youth leader; my relationship with him is like an uncle.” This youth leader also corrected them, taught them about living in community and about God and they regarded him as one of the preachers, with almost the same reverence as for the pastor. But Kyung-mi did not have much interaction with him: “I haven't talked much to the pastor, but I am grateful that he is and has been rescuing North Korean defectors like us, and I am also thankful that he set up Durihana so we could stay.”

Jia, who had lived at Durihana for a while first described all her relationships as good: “I learn different things from different people. I am close to all the leaders and can talk about how I am doing. When my heart is not feeling good they can see it so they'll ask me. They'll help me to pray. That helps.” In the second interview Jia opened up about some challenges with an older ‘sister’, an adult North Korean from ‘the first wave’. Her side of the story was that the older sister had been lying about her to cover for her own mistakes. The case increased and started to involve several other students and made the older sister look bad. It ended with her scolding Jia, leaving her heartbroken and struggling for ten months. Here the interview went off track and we ended up consoling her. None of the leaders had so far stepped into this situation and it was left unresolved.

A well-spoken and well-dressed boy of 15 had reflected much on this topic: “The pastor and Samonim are the best things about this place, they treat me very well. I really admire the pastor, because he goes to many people he doesn't have a relationship with, to help them. One of the teachers always treats me well, and anytime I have a problem this teacher will pray with me. I really love them, the teachers” (De).

But when he was asked if he could go to them and share his concerns, he answered: “I wanted to talk to the leaders before. Then Samonim said to me that she wants me to study abroad, so my Dad said that if she chooses you, you need to do better than anyone else and make her think that choosing you was not a bad choice. So if I have any problems I won't really tell any of the leaders.”

4.5 Religious life in Durihana

Janet explained that the pastor and the leaders were aware that all these services might not be optimal, but for now they claimed this is all they have. There had been incidents of the children in the past roaming around the city on their own, getting in trouble. After that the leaders decided to have more services to keep them occupied. Pastor Chang also voiced another explanation for the many services. During one he ended the sermon explaining: “Thank you for coming to this service and remembering God today! I want you to remember what God has done for us, like the Israelites were told to remember what God had done for them. This is why I emphasize the services and why to humble yourself. If you are comfortable it is easy to leave God and there is no future for you.” Church services were a way of remembering God and religious life in Durihana evolved around them. When pastor Chang mentioned ‘what God had done for them’ I believe he meant that by managing to escape North Korea and come to the safe haven of Durihana in South Korea, he gave God the credit for taking them out of poverty and captivity and into freedom, from a country where they were not allowed freedom of speech and religion, they now had a new and better life.

4.5.1 THE CHURCH SERVICES

Kong lit up while talking about church: “We get to learn a lot if we concentrate during the classes. I

like church services, listening to the sermon and trying to obey what I've heard. I try really hard to do what I've heard during service. Church services are the best thing about being here! I feel Jesus [presence] when I praise him and sing songs, and one time [getting emotional feeling this] I was crying without knowing why."

Kaia agreed: "The meetings have never been really hard for me. And it's really good to sit there and listen to the messages. I love to lead the singing and while some pastors make it so difficult to understand what they are actually referring to pastor Chang's messages are so clear and simple. It's easy, it's interesting, I like sitting there."

I must admit I was overwhelmed and surprised the first time I entered a Sunday morning meeting in Durihana. I felt like I was back in the 1990's, then being a young girl part of a conservative church congregation. Also having visited many large churches in Seoul during the late 1990's I felt like time had stopped, and nothing had changed since then. The pastor was wearing a suit while the choir, pianist and ushers all were in white robes with a green ribbon. The church room was divided and the pastor sat in the front on a higher level the whole time. They still used a hymn book and the children all had their own black leather Bible and considerable time was spent reading it. Two women read scriptures. Everything was very orderly and proper, and all the children completely silent, some falling asleep. The pastor spoke for a fairly long time. Then the youth service an hour later had a very different attitude. Everybody was awake. The service was full of songs, a full band playing, fewer people and hardly any adults. Some of the youth would help lead the worship. Some lifted their hands and were obviously engaged in the worship. The second sermon by the pastor also seemed to be on a lighter note. He interacted more with the children and made them respond and laugh. I started to relax with time and felt more at home than the initial first shock.

Several mentioned what they learned during the services in the interviews. Kyung-mi explained it like this: "I do think that whenever I listen to sermons, and hear the stories from the Word of God, I feel like he is near. I have had a chance to think deeply about what the preachers and pastor tell us about the teachings of the Bible, and through that I [have] experienced the greatness of God and that has affected my life."

A couple felt otherwise about the services. “I go because I have to, but when you listen to the messages, sometimes I get something out of it sometimes not. I try to agree with what’s being said” (Kang-dae). “It is really annoying to go every day, it’s not by free will, it’s forced. All the boys think like this. There are too many activities they are forced to go to; the church, choir practice and other activities, there’s no free time” (De). De spoke on behalf of the other boys here and explained that the boys did not have anything against Christianity, but it was the constant meetings that bothered them.

4.5.2 THEIR BELIEFS

When asked directly about their faith, Kong said he had a relationship with God. “When I am alone and before I go to bed, I pray, and when I am depressed and tired, or in pain, I switch off the light, and look up, and that’s when I see the cross. I still have issues, but after I pray I feel better. It is easy for me to believe. Religion has treated me good.” When we asked him to explain more in depth what he finds hard he had a difficult time finding words: “Because I’m a sinner, I’m not sure if I can carry on my own cross.” After that he started to repeat himself and would avoid my look. A similar experience happened with one other informant: “I believe in God,” said Jia, “whether I am happy or sad or anything in between, I will always talk to God about it, he is my friend. When I am reading the Bible I get convicted about what to do or not.” But when asked to explain what this meant in depth she started to repeat herself too. Through the whole first interview she looked like she was bored and did not think about any of the questions before she gave an answer. She answered it in a way that seemed very static.

Kyung-mi said her faith started to grow in Durihana. “When I was in North Korea, I didn’t know the details. All I knew is that there was a God, I would just close my eyes... But once I arrived in Korea and Durihana, I came to know the existence of God more deeply, and developed, and now have a faith. I want to believe in him more deeply. And now that I can pray myself, I can communicate with God.” Sharing this Kyung-mi had tears in her eyes, and the answers were given in a voice full of emotions.

De told us that he had believed in God his whole life. When he was young he wanted to hear Bible stories, but as he grew up he became more cautious and then forgot about it. When he came to

Durihana he started thinking about it again. “I take a long time going through Bible stories and processing them, because I find them very interesting. When I get to a difficult place I can feel God. But I don’t fully believe in God because I don’t fully understand [since Korean is not fluent].” The volunteer Mark said he had had much contact with De, and saw in the beginning much hesitancy and resistance in learning Korean and going to church. “He seems a lot more into it now!” he observed.

The questions about faith seemed to come as a surprise on Kang-dae, and he said several times that he had never thought about this before. “I do believe in God, I do, but it’s not 100%.” But when we asked more questions he did not know what to answer. Janet said he seemed embarrassed, and when he realized he could not excel in these questions, he shut down and became reserved and unwilling to share. We were both surprised, I considered him the one I had connected with the most up to this point. He was usually very talkative and open.

In the second interview he was more relaxed and shared openly. The difference from the first interview could be because we deliberately spent the beginning of the second interview talking about sports and growing up in North Korea, areas we believed he was comfortable with. “At first after arriving in Seoul I just went to churches and attended services out of my will, I didn’t want to be there, I’d be very sleepy, nodding off, playing with my phone, but then I still liked the singing part. I don’t think I really had any faith back then, but compared to now I think I have grown a lot. Since coming to Durihana it gradually just grew. But I don’t yet feel like I have a relationship with God. Not quite.”

After the interviews I would always discuss the children’s answers with Janet, and concerning their personal belief Janet questioned if they understood the Gospel in depth and if it had become their own. Miss Han told me in class one day that she believed some of them are Christians, and some are too young to think about it yet: “They are always joking, very playful, even the older children. They don’t want to be serious. It could be a protection mechanism. They don’t want to face the consequences or think about what happens later in life. I hope they will have a faith later in life when they mature.”

A specific moment changed Kaia and her beliefs. “At first I felt a bit lonely and was just listening. But afterwards something enlightened me and it became all good, not so difficult anymore. Through Bible studies and prayer meetings I’ve come to know God and Jesus. I think it’s been somewhat interesting

and mysterious, how he listens to our prayers. Now I don't feel there's anything negative about this place or about myself. Yes, after the enlightenment I think everything is good" (Kaia).

Kong told us that he was sleeping during the first services until the pastor woke him up in the third meeting and asked him to stand up. From then on he was awake and started to understand more and gradually changed. "I began learning and trying, and then started to believe." Though Kaia talked about "the enlightenment" it seemed like she and the others were describing a gradual conversion. "Before I came here I never prayed to anything. We had Bible classes and I started to see that God is good, so slowly slowly... it was a process of me beginning to believe in God. And through the process one day I realized God exists. And I want to live a life knowing that he exists" (Jia).

Some of the informants had the view that to believe in God was a prerequisite for staying in Durihana: "You have to believe in God here. You have to start learning about him and understanding him, so when I first got here, I had class about God and Jesus, how they affect our lives." And then for some it became personal over time: "I was very moved, so from that class on I thought that I should also start to believe in God." Several of them talked about gratitude for being 'saved' and having received so much help, and one way to show their gratitude was to wholeheartedly 'take on' the faith of the organization. This was a strong motivation several expressed. "They've done so much for me, so I want to believe in him. I want to have faith in God, trust and follow him" (Jia).

4.5.3 THE FAITH OF THEIR PEERS

One significant aspect about life at Durihana is that the children live together and are together at all times. At night there are few grown ups around them, and no one in charge of supervising them, so their peers develop the role of being more than friends. Older girls instruct the younger, in the boys dorm the older boys each lead a room of younger boys. They spend so much time together that I wanted to hear their view on the beliefs of their peers.

At first Jia expressed that they all had beliefs: "Everyone is Christian here. There is not a big difference between us, because everyone will bring their good things and bad things to the Lord." This was

complimented by Kaia: “Everyone has faith here because they pray. Everyone sort of believes in God.” But when asked follow up questions and to explain in detail, her answer changed somewhat: “Maybe some people wonder why we are doing this and maybe God isn’t real, that he doesn’t exist. Maybe there are people thinking like this, or maybe there isn’t.”

Kong said that he thought the girls had faith by seeing how they acted, but the boys’ faith were not so good. “The boys are really into gaming and I think that kind of behavior can’t come from believing in Jesus. There are definitely some of the boys that don’t believe in God. I pray for them, and worry about them too.” One of the boys had asked Kong: “If there is a God, why won’t he answer any of my prayers?” and Kong had tried to explain this and others questions from peers.

De meant that having what he called ‘sincere faith’ was not so common in Durihana: “From my observations many students do not have sincere faith. What they say and what they do is not what the Bible says. They know the Bible, but they don’t do it.” He went on and gave an example: “When I first came here there was a boy that I became really good friends with, but because of some of his choices and behavior I asked him this: Do you really believe in God? He said that he did. So he called himself a Christian, but the things that he did to others were not good. Many students here are all talk, they do them so the pastor sees it.” Others had told him that sometimes they believed, sometimes not. Kang-dae agreed with De and Kong in this and added: “I guess most of them have faith, but the middle school children struggle and behave badly.” They connected the behavior of the peers with their beliefs.

4.5.4 THEIR DOUBTS

When asking about their faith and beliefs, everyone had something to say, some answers sounded like phrases they heard daily from the pulpit more than their own words. I wondered if they as easily could talk about their doubts and struggles with faith, and found that it was harder for most of them to express it, and it took longer time to answer. This could be due to the expectation they had that they had to be Christian to stay there. I was surprised by the openness and honesty from Kyung-mi, being a quiet and shy girl: “If God is really there, he must have listened to my prayers, but if not, then all the time I’ve spent praying is meaningless. This is a doubt of mine and a conflict in my mind. I really hope he listens to my prayers.”

De started to talk about his doubts before we asked: “Since I came to Durihana I have had a lot of internal conflict about the Bible, if it is applicable today. The amazing stories in the Bible stories I can’t connect to reality today. As an example; Jesus says in the book of Matthew, chapter 5, ‘if someone slaps you on one cheek, then give the other cheek, and if someone steals your robe, give them another one.’ This means to give to people in need, but I don’t think this is a possibility. People nowadays hit your cheek and then they also hit the other one. Nobody would turn the other cheek. People in the Bible were better people than they are today. I have seen that the world is not a beautiful place. I have a lot of questions like these to God.” Then the interview took a different turn. He was very eager to hear our thoughts on Christianity and how we believed the life of a Christian should be. My Chinese translator Kayla and I both explained our views, which seemed to intrigue him, he wanted to hear more. Several times during the interviews and my personal talks with him he said that he had seen and experienced so much bad in the world, growing up mostly in an orphanage in China, and he struggled to understand how life could be as beautiful as the Bible sometimes described it. He did not see Christians turn the other cheek or giving all they had to the poor. Talking more in depth with him about this, it was evident he did not mean the leaders, which about he had nothing bad to say, but his peers and their behavior.

4.5.5 PRAYERS

Prayer was not a specific topic I asked them about, but it naturally came up with each of the six children. One said that he never prays with others, only alone. A couple of the boys expressed that they do not pray together or are prayed for, while two of the girls said that they do. “Sometimes if I’m really sad the older people will always pray for me, and when somebody is having a difficulty we’ll all get together and pray for that person” (Jia). The girls were using prayer as a solution for some of their problems they were encountering. The girls saying that they do pray together while the boys said they do not can come from different practices, but also that they might interpret ‘praying together’ differently. The boys’ answers indicated that ‘praying together’ was not the same to them as corporate structured prayer as a group.

When asked about prayer three of the informants, among them Kyung-mi mentioned a conference they recently went to where leaders were gathered and prayed together. For two of them this was the only examples they had of ‘praying together’. They all seemed to have liked it. Kaia called it “holding each other accountable” when they as friends helped each other in prayer and daily life. Kyung-mi explained

it similarly: “Prayer meetings were quite hard at first, but after a while my friends made it a bit easier for me to be at prayer meetings and it became fun.” One day Janet happened to come into Kaia’s room unannounced, almost all the girls were gathered in a circle, holding hands and praying, with Kaia leading the whole group. Janet was perplexed and amazed, and said she had never seen anything like this before. She said she thought it was an effect of opening up during the interviews that led to this. What was special about this incident was that it was not led or initiated by any grown up.

Kaia started to share about her background, but soon broke down crying. Once again an interview took a different turn. We listened to her and tried to console her and allow her talk and cry freely. Afterwards we asked if we could pray for her, she seemed very happy to accept and so we did. In the next interview she shared a lot of her beliefs, and told a story about answer to prayer: “You know how pastors and preachers tell us stories about how they prayed and God listened and they got the answer they were looking for? When I heard those stories about answers to prayer I wondered if it could really be that way and thought it could have been coincidences.” Then she shared a story of traveling in USA where they forgot to put the right lead in the car at the gas station. The car would not start so they sat down and prayed. When they returned to the car the lead came out and they could exchange it with the right one. To her this was a proof that God really listened to their prayers. She ended by saying he would answer “if you really mean it” (Kaia).

Janet told me that some of the teaching is focused on miracles and healing in Durihana. One of the couple leading the place were pregnant, and they were told that the baby would be born deformed. After they prayed, the next doctor visit showed that the baby would be normal. This was taken as a miracle and answer to prayers. The people that had escaped and arrived in Durihana had many similar stories. The children heard these stories often.

4.5.6 WORKING FOR GOD

Several of the informants seemed to connect their religious actions with having faith. “Now I have a small faith, but I want it to grow to the point where I will get answers from God,” explained Kyung-mi, “you know how if I really try to believe in God, he will answer my prayers. He responds to hardship. By waiting nothing good will happen to you.” We asked if it was hard for her to wait for God to

answer. She answered: “What I really meant - even if God doesn’t answer, I find my joy in just believing in him and having faith in him.” She seemed to be saying that when you experience hard things, God will help you through it. But you can not expect God to do something if you do not work. In general working seemed to be a big part of believing: “If you obey the rules, you won’t be disciplined. If we memorize Bible verses and clean our rooms we will get praised,” Kyung-mi added. They all had a notebook that they were required to write down what they were thankful for each day. In general this is not complained about.

Noticing how often the children mentioned things they believed they had to do for God, I asked some of them about grace, the opposite, an essential in Christianity, to see if they understood the concept. But all of them struggled to explain it. “The youth pastor talks a lot about grace,” said Kong, but had a difficult time explaining it, “support that we are getting from other people are grace...” Instead of explaining grace he started to share how it was important to help and do things for other people: “We have been told many times that we should try to help other people. Rather than be a receiver, be a giver. It is happier to give than to receive.” “I don’t really understand grace,” confessed Jia, “many times when I have done something wrong I’m not sure about how God feels about that.”

Seeing that the children were not used to getting something for nothing the pastor started handing out pocket money, so they would get something for “just being you”. Doing this led me to believe that the leaders are aware of and noticing that the children do many services to please, but do not always know how to receive freely without having done a good deed in the first place.

4.6 Concerns by informants

Several concerns were directly and indirectly raised by the various informants. Most of the children were reluctant and even embarrassed to answer these questions and I some times had to return to them several times, ask in different ways or accept that some of them would not answer me directly. From the adult informants I experienced much openness and honesty.

4.6.1 DESIRED CHANGE

I asked the children during the interviews what they would change at the center if they could. A couple mentioned a need for a dorm leader for the girls and more rules in both dorms. Janet shared that it had always been pastor Chang's heart to have an older girl live with them to set boundaries and correct them. There was at times a lot of drama going on in the girls dorm or between the boys and the girls, that went unnoticed by the leaders. There had been earlier attempts to have 'small groups' for the children with the older North Koreans as leaders, one for girls and one for boys, but it did not work. In Janet's opinion the first wave was not mature enough spiritually, emotionally or practically to lead and help the children grow. They would often yell to control and get respect from the younger, and did not understand that "leadership is friendly, asking kindly, love and servanthood," she explained.

Another desired change the children mentioned was to have steady teachers and less volunteers coming and going. I noticed during my English teaching how the children in both Middle school and High school were reluctant to start learning from me, yet another teacher, and wondered how long I was going to stay there and if I was coming back. Miss Han and Janet confirmed how difficult it was to find long-term volunteers and that those who were paid did not necessarily have a teaching degree or any practice teaching children. In mentioning a desire for steady teachers and being reluctant to receive new volunteers, I believed the children missed stability and certainty both at school and at church.

As mentioned earlier some of the children voiced concerns and critical opinions of Durihana being persistently religious and having too many activities mandatory, but besides De nobody were able or willing to go into further detail. In my observation the concerns about the daily services were important issues at Durihana, and some of the volunteers were able to elaborate more. "There are some controversies about this place, and especially the enormous Christian services and teachings here. Are 5.30 a.m meetings for kids good? Is it all right to push Christianity on children so early?" were questions Mark had discussed with South Korean peers. But attending several of the morning meetings himself, he had to admit that he liked them, and that there was a "very special atmosphere there". Another concern on his mind was the education the children were given, with too much emphasize on religion, and less on schooling. "Is the school too easy? Will the children be able to go out into work and normal school in the Korean society afterwards? And those with parents, are the parents given an 'easy way out?'" By this he meant that the parents could abandon the children and not have to pay for their living, while someone else (like Durihana) covered all the costs.

4.6.2 NORTH KOREAN MINDSET

I was told by several that the leaders have had a hard time changing the mindset of the first wave. Janet shared that there were several challenges with the women living there. Some wanted to leave, and some were open about staying in Durihana was only for financial reasons. She also explained how the North Koreans are fragile, easily offended, will not accept correction and blame others for their own mistakes. Several have complained to Janet about the South Koreans they have encountered and their way of living: “They seem to judge them and pull back and isolate, and then grow bitter.” One person living there was blaming the professor for her failing classes, another one quit university after having been told by a girl that the university she attended was not the best there was. “There is a victim mentality among them. The pastor has even been accused [by them] of lying and abandoning them and getting financial gain for starting Durihana. Some of these have left and started a bad lifestyle in Korea or China,” Janet pointed out. As stated in chapter 1 it is not new information that the defectors that came in the 1990’s and early 2000 struggle in South Korean society.

Janet explained that any from the first wave stopped attending church and coming to Durihana for meetings as soon as they left the organization. Some still living there are planning to marry men without the same faith. Janet said there had been very little reflection around their own faith and lack of the others. Their biggest concern was financial stability. This could be an indication of a weak religious integration. “They can pray beautiful prayers,” the pastor once told her, “but do they mean it?” She explained to me how North Koreans are used to saying beautiful phrases about Kim Il-sung and the leaders of North Korea.

Janet explained how Koreans have a deep pride, and for those that leave their pride can prevent them from admitting mistakes and coming back. Kang-dae had at an earlier point left the school, but was now back. For Janet it was natural to assume that ‘It must have been hard to swallow the pride!’

4.6.3 COMMITMENT

A paradox I observed in this community was the constant change there was within these tight scheduled frames. Several times the children I tutored canceled on me, the interviews were delayed or changed more often than not. During the day new events would come up frequently; choir practice, visiting a

church or night school. School classes were changed and cancelled, while services were the only mainly consistent event. It was interesting to observe such a strong, disciplined structure, but with so many changes within them. The volunteers were often called on the spot and expected to drop what they were doing and come at once. There was a strong expectancy of saying yes when asked about something, and I struggled when declining.

Several volunteers have come and said they wanted to stay and declared their passion and commitment to this place, only to quit a short time later. Samonim was eagerly looking for volunteers to help out, for instance by being a visitor home for the children without parents during holidays, or coming to cook daily or volunteer teach, but there always seemed to be a lack of willing people, especially to commit for a long time. According to Janet the pastor knew the children and young adults are lacking, but the most gifted and spiritual volunteers are the ones that never stay.

4.6.4 OUTSIDE CONTACT

One of the concerns of several volunteers was that the children and adults did not have South Korean friends and wondered whether they could integrate culturally and socially in the South Korean church and community or not. While the children often are performing, having volunteers and visitors constantly, and frequently attending South Korean churches and services, they spoke of little deeper connection and friendship with outsiders. Jia said she was close to one of the ‘cooking ladies’ volunteering there and Kaia said she had friends she met in America and a few in churches in South Korea. Besides that all their relations were mostly with other North Korean defectors. “In Korea all my friends belong to Durihana, so even if my contacts are outside contacts, they somehow are connected to Durihana,” Kaia explained.

They expressed a big difference between North Korean and South Korean youth, in size for one part, but also dialect and manner. “They have much better grades than us!” laughed Kyung-mi, “most of them attend after school institutes and work hard there.” As stated earlier many North Korean children in South Korean schools experience bullying and ridicule, being socially marginalized which again leads many to schools like Durihana. Miss Han told me that this school had a good reputation for the children behaving well and changing, unlike some of the other defector schools.

The defectors that had a most successful integration into the South Korean society, according to Janet, were women that married South Korean men, becoming a part of a larger family and having children of their own. “They look more content, different, happy! And they visit us and still partake in the services.” The concern about lack of outside contact was voiced many times by the volunteers, but when I asked the children about it, they answered shortly that they had no or minimum contact without showing any concern about it.

4.7 Dreams and desires

Several of the children, without being asked, shared about their dreams and desires in life which I found interesting for this study. Having dreams and desires I attributed to possibly successful integration, because it showed that they were at a place secure enough to think ahead. They expressed not having had dreams before, growing up in North Korea and China, and Kaia commented with excitement on this distinct change in her life, daring to dream for the first time: “Here I have found my future dreams. I never thought about that in China, but now I want to go to university in the future and am finding out which one I want to attend. This seemed so far away from my situation, but here in Korea it is so much closer, it’s actually achievable.” She and a couple of others expressed a desire to become translators, already speaking both Korean and Chinese they knew this was valuable and necessary in the Korean society with an increasing Chinese immigration.

Kong expressed a desire to be a pastor in the future and several of the people I talked to knew of this. Kong was very noticeable in Durihana, he was an example to the younger brothers, and in my opinion treated them with a firm hand and love. The way he appeared to ‘live what he believed’ with his whole heart indicated that his own words of putting ‘his heart into what he did’ actually was true. Janet had some concerns that some of his answers were lines he had *heard* from the leaders, but not necessarily *understood*, and we discussed whether Durihana’s focus on Kong and his great example could pressure him to become the next pastor. One afternoon while helping Kong in his research for future university studies where he expressed interest in engineering, Samonim came over and commented: “But he is going to be a pastor!” We asked Kong what he would do if not becoming a pastor, and then he said he would like to be a farmer. Both him and De expressed a desire to study in America one day. Kang-dae had been in Canada and Kaia had visited the States, and they were clearly wanting to go back and at least visit.

Janet told me that several North Korean dissidents do not end up in South Korea, due to integration struggles. Many of them live, at least for a while, in different parts of America or other countries in Asia. At the center two of the older North Korean women had found American men they planned to marry, and wanted to move with them and away from South Korea. So while dreaming of going abroad could be a sign of integration it could also be a sign of not being satisfied with here and now, and dreaming of something better.

Kong also expressed a desire to help others. “I really want to do God’s work, but not with a fake heart. I wonder if there is any way I can be in a position to help other people. I think a lot about that.”

Kyung-mi expressed an interest in my home country, Norway, and I spent time looking at pictures of my town and family with her. After the first interview she said that hearing about Norway had been the best part of the interview. She said she wanted to travel to a place with plenty of nature and pure air because it would make her feel “stable and comfortable”. She said that North Korea was not like that, and along with explaining how she wished there would not be so many different teachers coming and going in Durihana, I suspected it to be a desire for more stability that she had not yet experienced.

4.8 Conclusion

Concluding chapter four there is so much material here that would be interesting to analyze, and though not all will be debated I chose to keep it. For chapter five I have chosen five main areas I believe are the most essential to portray the role of religion in Durihana and the religious integration process they are going through. I will introduce chapter five with analyzing pastor Chang’s role in Durihana and see Durihana in the context of being a high culture society. Then my main themes will be the concepts *believing, belonging and behaving* in Durihana since after going through my research much of my material fall under one of these catagories. The fifth theme is an analysis of the commitment the children show to Durihana, and how they have conformed to fit in. Will their faith sustain past Durihana?

Chapter 5: Analysis

This is an exploratory study where I mainly have been looking for the children's experience in Durihana, coming from North Korea and China, and a non-Christian, non-religious setting and into a strong Christian organization. Through this research I sought to answer the following questions: What are their experiences, thoughts, feelings, ideas, meanings? How has the North Korean children in Durihana integrated in aspect to faith? Which role does religion play in Durihana and the children's lives? How do they integrate socially, with their specific background from North Korea and China, and how does the strong focus on religion in Durihana impact this, and their understanding of what it means to be integrated? What struggles and opportunities do they have in this integration process?

Working with my material I found it interesting to analyze how the concepts of believing, belonging and behaving were shaping religion in Durihana, belonging displaying whether they felt at home or not, believing meaning that the children had exhibited a faith of their own or not, and behaving showing whether or not they had changed their conduct. These concepts and the correlation between them became valuable to understand and analyze my material, for instance to portray the struggles and opportunities they have had in this integration process. I also believe it would say something about how they have integrated to faith.

5.1 Religious ideology

In this chapter I will focus on Pastor Chang, his role and contribution to the center, and I will discuss the theology and teaching he and others gave and how this and understanding the Korean society have formed the religious integration for the children.

5.1.1 PASTOR CHANG AND THE KOREAN SOCIETY

First I want to take a look at how Pastor Chang and his role has contributed to religious integration. He is the indisputable leader in Durihana and the organization has grown dependent on him partly because of the position he holds, which is normal according to Sandland (2011: 15). His role may not be outwardly defined, but as the founder and pastor of the organization it is just something 'everybody knows'. In general there are many discourses in Durihana, 'unwritten rules' that 'everybody' follows, which is common in homogeneous meaning systems where member take the worldview for granted

(McGuire 2002: 58). One of the taken for granted views are that you respect and obey the leaders and do not question their authority (see below). My experience was that to live in Durihana meant to be a part of the direction pastor Chang was taking the organization. Details and visions were formed by him. This seems to have taken place over time, just like the organization has developed from one single prayer meeting. The center seemed to be filled with his thoughts and ideas without them being explicitly written down anywhere. One of the reason how that had happened I believe was through Pastor Chang giving his thoughts and ideas about the children and the center authority through voicing them during sermons and teachings. One could suggest that he almost is speaking on behalf of God, on how life is supposed to be on the center. Why is he doing this? It is a powerful way of communicating, when children as young as six sit several days a week and listen to him communicate from a pulpit his thoughts and beliefs. How is it like to sit there and hear this? As mentioned in chapter four and will be debated in this chapter also, some like it and some do not, but either way this possibly have a strong impact on the children.



Appendix 2 High-context culture versus low-context cultures (Communicating across culture)

South Korea is a high context culture and Øyvind Dahl has described these cultures as ‘collectively oriented’ as opposed to ‘individualistic oriented’ which we tend to find in low context cultures like Scandinavia. Values and norms are determined by a group mentality. For this group being dependent on the group and each other are goals. Another goal is to live and act in harmony with each other. People in high context cultures tend to speak more indirectly to one another and not only words, but the

atmosphere is particularly important to understand the situation. Courtesy is a virtue. In this environment the religious and the material is seen as one whole and the private and public goes hand in hand. What is emphasized are social hierarchy, family and relatives, authority of the older, spontaneity and integration. Relationships are important and gender roles are strictly conserved (2001: 72, 75-77). Knowing this it was not difficult to understand pastor Chang's status and leadership style, since, as Dahl describes it: "Some of the message can even be conveyed in who the person is that speaks, his rank, affiliation and dignity. The person itself can be *a sign*, semiotically speaking" (2001: 77, my English translation). As a sign I find Pastor Chang resembling *the law* in Durihana. What he said from the pulpit and to the staff was considered to be rules. In the daily life he and his wife had the power to do what they found best, affecting the children and all the staff. He was often quoted by the children and the volunteers. Not many seemed to question what he did, and nobody questioned his authority. "I know what I can and cannot say to him!" a visiting pastor answered me, when I asked him about this (Pastor Park). As roles are more emphasized and carry heavier weight in high context societies the leaders will often have more power. There were many outward reasons, even for a Western mind like mine, to explain why he was accepted as the law. He had quit his job as a successful businessman and given his entire life, finances and resources to rescue North Koreans and then provide a home for them in South Korea. He had risked his life, been in jail in China, and still continued. Many heroic stories swirled around him wherever he went.

Hierarchy in age gives indication and security in who to look up to, ask for help, who you can lead and discipline and trust to take leadership. When speaking to them from the pulpit he in some ways resembled a distant father, they relate to him and talk to him, but always with reverence and respect and a certain distance. Given their history from North Korea, where the now deceased leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Young-il's words were the law, and the inhabitants listened with reverence to everything they said, this would have been interesting to take a deeper look at.

As quoted in 4.6.5 it was interesting to me that so few experienced integration into the South Korean society, though research from other contexts have shown that physical withdrawal from the outside world is normal and often perceived as good in religious communities (McGuire 2002: 81). One could wonder if this is a conscious decision from the leaders to protect the children against South Korean secularism. When the children roamed around in their spare time meeting other South Korean youth,

this was solved with more meetings (4.5). They do not feel part of a larger whole than Durihana and are not integrated into South Korean society. Only a few from the first wave has or is finishing University. They do not talk about South Korea as ‘my country’, which is normal for South Korean children. They do not use that term about North Korea or China either. This shows some of their loneliness, they do not fully belong anywhere. Their only home is Durihana. I will return to the topic of belonging and loneliness later in this analysis.

5.1.2 THEOLOGY AND TEACHING

Much of the teaching is about motive, the heart, attitude and character. Once Pastor Chang told a story of one of the children doing something selfless from the pulpit. Him and the other leaders want this to be the focus, for the children to act righteously with a pure heart and have a strong character, even when nobody sees it. Their thought life is addressed as well as their attitudes and actions. This is also seen in other communities. They are part of a religious discourse where there is emphasis on the children having come out of captivity (from North Korea) (see heading on website) and now should serve God back. Their lives are meant to be of service to God. Though the children themselves may not be able to formulate this into their own words, I believe there has been an internalization of values of a theology focused on deeds and selfless commitment.

Kong was an example of this (4.4.1). He said in one of the interviews that he did not want prayer for himself, but just for his family that were not believers. Kong repeatedly said he wanted to help people, but was afraid he could not do a good job, “bear the cross,” as he called it. During meals and services I often saw him helping others with a smile, volunteering to do dishes, helping the little children, encouraging them, it was hard not to notice his presence. I interpreted that he was a role model to the younger ones, in doing selfless acts for others, and not the least that he wanted to become a pastor.

As mentioned before pastor Chang has been disappointed with the first wave, not professing a strong faith (Janet). It would be likely to assume that this disappointment that led him to rescue younger child defectors, could also have affected the methods to teach them. While Durihana contained less people and experienced less attention, pastor Chang could interact more closely with them. At this point there are so many of them, it would be nearby impossible for him to interact strongly in all the children’s day to day life.

Maybe the strong focus on faith communicated mainly from the pulpit has been too overwhelming for them, or the big concepts like grace and faith have not really been understood and made their own like described in 4.5.7. Jia admitted she did not understand grace. Janet and miss Han wondered if they really understood the Gospel. There are distinct messages communicated to the children, and the children accept this, but much is not understood and various action is taking place as I will analyze later on.

5.2 Belong

In this chapter I will discuss various aspects of belonging and how the children adapt and adjust to feel connected to the Durihana family. I will also focus on the emotional struggles I detected, and how it affects their belonging.

5.2.1 FAMILY

The religious community in Durihana has created a fellowship that functions as a family and I would argue that Stephen Warner's words "home away from home" (2005: 88) are appropriate in understanding this situation. The North Koreans were already used to being one homogenous group, some in North Korea, and some in China, and in this way their past helped them to integrate to the homogeneity in Durihana. I believe the children recognize the structures of family and being one group, like Berger and Luckmann underlines, placing importance on fellowship that resembles a family (Sandland 2011: 15). When I described living there as very safe, feeling trust, I believe it was the atmosphere of family I was experiencing along with every generation being present interacting with each other. They had created a place where one trusted one another and defined themselves within the frames of a family. There were unwritten rules formed through teaching and culture not to steal, always be kind and include weaker family members. With their background, where stealing and not trusting each other was a common problem, not locking our doors was a sign of the belonging they felt there.

One of Dahls' theories say that society needs to take its role in including the new member to have a successful integration, and in Durihana I saw the older children or those who had been there a while take this role seriously (2013: 225). As mentioned before, South Korea is a society with age hierarchy, and the older children led, disciplined and helped younger children. This is a strong contribution to

religious integration and experiencing belonging, because the older ones model behavior, faith and tells the younger ones what to do and what to say, even what to believe. The older children play the role of Onnis and Oppas (Korean term for older sisters and older brothers) and this structure is experienced as safe. They also keep them accountable, corrects them if they are wrong, and praise them for doing right. As soon as they learn, they again can start modeling this to the younger children or new ones. This prevents a huge age gap between the generations, and the learning environment is characterized by everyone knowing their role as giver and receiver according to age with a safe environment to learn and fail in. The children have someone to admire and look up to and are emotionally dependent on them. Like Sandland describes, within these relationships the children's new identity is made possible (2011: 15).

With this hierarchy it is natural that the children want the older brothers and sisters to be content with them, and the older ones take pride in teaching the younger ones. In wanting to please, De and others confirmed my suspicions that not many or any critical questions were raised directly from children to leaders, but some times from younger children to older children, and older children to volunteers and youth leaders.

5.2.2 ADJUSTMENTS

Through the whole first interview Jia looked like she was bored, not thinking about her answers, but giving them right away (4.5.2). Like Kong (4.7) it sounded to me like rehearsed phrases and not her own words. Janet had some concerns that some of his answers were lines he had *heard* from the leaders, but not necessarily *understood* (4.5.5). The children are used to much teaching, and in several interviews the translator and I detected phrases that sounded very grown up and when we asked the children about it, they would repeat and could not explain it. It seemed common to adapt these sayings and phrases as their own, without giving much thought to what they actually meant. In trusting their leaders, they also trusted what they said and believed it to be true. This could be a sign of strong belonging and trust to the leaders and their newfound home, especially since miss Han explained how those with biological parents would not do this with them. I would argue that because they feel belonging they have taken on Durihana's *meaning system*, which McGuire writes about, without necessarily understanding it, or all of it. It could also be a strategy to adjust. The children have an

experience of what is ‘appropriate’ and have a deep desire to belong and receive the benefits of behaving according to the unwritten rules where there is a gratitude system where they are being honored for good conduct and service. Kong was openly credited for his positive behavior. They know what to do to get credit, what is considered ‘right things’ and ‘right opinions’. To belong here it is important to agree in the message in Durihana. They try, and that is how they perceive belonging in this group (2002: 62-63).

De did not want to raise questions to the leaders because he was afraid he might not get to study in America. Here is another example of an adjustment strategy. Why would asking questions disqualify him from that? What led him to make that a reasonable assumption? By raising critical questions it seems like he would move outside what is acceptable and promoted in Durihana, saying there is an unwritten rule here of ‘not talking about bad things’ and a discourse of not questioning the leaders directly. The leaders’ roles in this becomes focused on ruling, not necessarily understanding. The power balance between the children and the leaders are so uneven that the outcome is sometimes distrust. This is another one of the struggles in the integration process where the children adjust to what is expected of them.

Most of my interviewees had never considered talking to the leaders and Kong said they could only give advice. This does not show a lot of trust in them, really believing they could tell them everything, including the bad, and get real help for their problems. Why did they not trust them? Or if they did, why did they not believe they could help them? One reason could be that they take care of themselves, and rely on each other since there are no or random supervision by adults at nights and weekends. Sometimes Samonim or Pastor Chang or others will be around to visit, sometimes not. They can be up as late as they want, watch what they like on their computers and TV and talk about what they would like without any adult listening or seeing what they are doing. This has created a culture of them taking on the adults’ roles as leaders and going with problems to each other instead of the leaders. They can not really be there to help them, like Kong insinuated. What does this say about belonging in Durihana? Does it mean that they feel closer belonging to their peers than to their leaders?

5.2.3 EMOTIONAL STRUGGLES AND BELONGING

Nicewander found out among other issues, that North Koreans fitting into South Korean society resulted in dealing with loneliness (2013: 75). This was evident in Durihana as well. I would argue that religion played the role of comfort when they felt lonely. Several said that they could go to God with their problems which shows belonging and faith. They were trying to cope with loss, separation and disorientation they had experienced, and some theories show that faith structures can provide safety and someone to go to for help (Frederiks 2015: 186-187).

Loneliness is a large struggle in their integration process, and the emotional and affective aspect is an important component in how well they integrate or not. Their personal problems, their biography and personality all are important factors (McGuire 2002: 77-78). Some feel that they have 'no one to tell it to' and end up showing 'too much' emotions which causes disharmony within the group and therefore are frowned upon. In this sense Kaia's emotions, as explained in Chapter 4 became a threat to the harmony. The other children reacted negatively, became insecure without consideration of her need to cry. This incident spoke a lot to me about keeping up a facade, while emotions, viewed as negative, were held on the inside. It made me question what went on behind this facade and if there were more children than Kaia that held in what needed to come out. I wondered if this was a place where there was only room for 'happy feelings' where discipline and structure was seen as the only solution to 'bad' conduct. Why would it not be okay to cry in front of the other children? Could they not have explained that Kaia was sad because of her Dad dying and her experiences from her past? Why were they not told that she was only grieving, and that it was normal and good? In observing this I started to wonder what kind of effects this could have on the children's lives and mental health later on in life. The way this was handled made me believe Durihana had an unwritten rule that crying or any other 'negative' emotions would mean losing face to them, and that would not look good to the outsiders like visitors. Not showing these kinds of emotions shows integration of actions, but not necessarily of the whole person, they were at times acting the way it was expected of them, so it would not upset others.

The children could not understand why Kaia wanted to be alone. They had no depth in understanding her deeper emotions, which increased her disengagement and lead to her isolating more. I believe this showed that she did not fully experience belonging since she could not let all her emotions out. She was starting to ask doubtful questions, which is a beginning stage of disaffiliation (McGuire 2002: 92).

Though the children did not understand her crying and isolating, they did understand loneliness and pain. But though the leaders would pray with them (4.5.6) I did not experience them fully understanding how to emotionally meet these children's depths, and not much counseling or other social services were provided. Maybe the children were not free, part of them were still in captivity (like in North Korea). Another explanation could be that the leaders were not cultivating this because they did not know it themselves, or because there was not enough resources or stable people. I believe Kaia was truly looking for *pure ideology and practice*, sensing through her emotions that something was not right, but not able to understand what it was, why she did not feel fully comfortable with her peers and leaders (McGuire 2002: 95).

Several of the children mentioned a lot of gossiping, inner conflicts, conflicts with the older from the first wave (which went both ways) and secrets they would hide from each other and the leaders. Their deeper needs and desires to talk seeped out through this rebellion. My impression during the interviews was that I was the first to hear some of this, and several of them clearly had a desire and need to share this with someone. What does this say about belonging? This shows one of the struggles in the integration process where, as Kaia explained that there were so much she wants to say, but nobody to tell.

I never heard the leaders or volunteers ask *why* the children were found roaming the streets, getting in contact with people not good for them or rebelling, they simply solved it with more services. There could be many reasons, one being that they did not know how to ask the children or how to handle it.

5.3 Believe

In this chapter I will discuss the concept transformation and how it relates to the children's view of the change in belief they had encountered. I will also analyze how they experience conversion and which motives they may have had in it.

5.3.1 TRANSFORMATION

According to Encyclopedia of Religion conversion is an inner transformation, the person turning around and experiencing a deep change. Some of the children, when asked about their current faith,

described an experience that I believe is equivalent to this. This experience includes personal growth and integration called 'mediating' (Holliday 2010: 178). Erikson describes a separation phase and transition where the person gradually breaks away from their former status to be free to be changed and "born a new" (Erikson 2010: 139). This new transformation means being part of something bigger, loving God in praying and talking to him, serving others and fellowshiping with each other. The youth described, as recorded in chapter 4, learning, growing and changing with joy in Durihana. When talking about change they all seemed to perceive change as good. And while describing their faith almost all of them had a 'before and now' experience where they had greatly changed, and even expecting it.

For the first time in their lives they have the opportunity to live normal lives in a global world which is a transforming experience for them. This excites them and spurs them on in accepting new things and to open their eyes. They travel, even abroad, experience new countries, food, conducts and have the chance to perform for thousands. I believe feeling connected to the global world makes a difference to them, they are connected in a way they never experienced in North Korea and China, and they finally feel important. On these travels they share about the changes they have experienced, much like "was lost, but now am found", they reinterpret their past, now explained as the hard life in North Korea and China without God. Now they are someone helping lost people not yet having arrived Durihana from North Korea, and they are fighting for this cause that are bigger than themselves.

The transformation I detected seemed to be confirmed in their singing and performing. For upcoming performances they were practicing a drama of the salvation story after school of Jesus being crucified and dying. All the children were actively involved. It was a simple play, but powerful for me to watch. It was not the performance in itself that affected me. It was *how* they did it, seemingly going into 'another world' and act from their hearts with a lot of emotion and intention. They played Jesus and God and the crucifixion with passion. Seeing such young children portray so much emotions during a play touched me. I wanted to see it again and again. They did not seem embarrassed by the simplicity or other peers watching. Their emotions were clearly involved, and they conveyed an emotional message with their drama, which touched my heart, not my mind.

Kaia's 'enlightenment-experience' (see 4.5.2), and Kong's description of the slowness of the process made it sound like a gradual conversion. Some of the children themselves stated that they now were believers, they had made a choice. The way Sandland describes it in his theory chapter, they had experienced withdrawal from their former lives, most of them not having any religion, and now becoming deeply involved in values and goals of a new group (2011: 23).

5.3.2 MOTIVATION FOR CONVERSION

Riley argues that to be accepted and acknowledged in a new culture you have to 'create yourself anew' (2007: 168). My material confirms many examples of children being willing to do so, or doing it without even knowing it. Durihana has given them a new life, new start, new hope. They were lost before, now they are safe and they created a new self where Kang-dae said he used to "do bad stuff", but not so much any more. "They have been so good to me, I want to believe, take on their faith," one said. The goodness of the pastor and Durihana is here directly or indirectly leading Jia to have faith, to change anew. She has seen it and experienced goodness, and wants to be accepted and acknowledged and as a response she wants to follow the same faith. What is happening here? I believe she is taking on the faith of Durihana, conversion from no faith to having faith where one of the motives could be paying debt. Another motive could be that she has experienced the conversion as a positive change and has made the faith 'her own'.

When most of the children express gratitude for being allowed into this place, being saved, and want to take on the faith as an expression of gratitude, that sounds like a strong motivation. They are thankful for what Durihana has done for them, therefore they want to believe. As new converts they compare their former evil ways of living with their now happy lives and are grateful to the newfound faith (McGuire 2002: 82). Their faith seemed very characterized by this, being thankful for everything they had received, and everything they had been saved from. For the children to mention that very early in the interviews, this stood out to me as an important motivation for them. They had not just come here for no reason, they had been saved from persecution, a life of poverty, uncertainty and many other risk-related relationships. They were eager to share about their thankfulness, and were praised when giving money and when writing in their 'thankful journal', but they were hesitant to share what they were upset about. This led me to believe that being ungrateful is not acceptable, and it is better to keep it to

yourself or your closest peers.

Many of the children that had one or two parents rarely wanted to go home and had a weak attachment with their parents, according to miss Han, and during the interview some voiced that they felt betrayed by their parents. There could be many reasons for this, one of them being that some of the parents had left them in North Korea and China, and now left them alone in Durihana. In most cases their biological parents did not confess to having faith. For them Durihana was their real home and they felt closer to the leaders and peers there than their own parents and biological siblings. Could it therefore be more natural for them then to take on the faith of Durihana, even though their parents at times were hostile against the Christian teaching? When their leaders and peers felt more like parents, uncles and aunts and siblings, a common faith united them and made them feel safe. It was safe to believe the same as everyone around them.

5.3.3 UNDERSTANDING FAITH

De admitted he did not understand the Bible, and him and Kong conclude that the boys do not have faith because they do not behave accordingly (4.5.3). Many have experiences of leaving family behind in North Korea, some even in jail, they have fled for their lives and lived on little food for years, others have spent their first years in orphanages. With these experiences and ‘glasses’ they try to see Christianity, and a relationship with God. For some, like De, the conclusion is that Christianity is too good to be true and it does not work practically because no one can live like that. The standard they have been taught is too high for them to reach, they are understanding a religion with deeds and rules that none of them can attain, and they have the impression that it is up to them how they excel. All of them express hesitancy whether or not they can live this life modeled and explained to them. All of them want to, and some are very clear they are falling short. When some do, like De and Kang-dae, and they end up leaving, do they conclude that they do not have enough faith to live the life of a Christian? Or do they take the faith with them, because they know having faith does not depend on actions alone, but find other ways, churches, cultures to express it in? Many conversions are short lived, and some have an increasing disengagement. Research shows that this can be especially difficult when there are strong ties to the group. There can be external and internal reasons for this, which are both evident in Durihana (McGuire 2002: 91-93, 95).

5.4 Behave

Here I will focus on how the children seemed to be religiously integrated through believing in the works they did, and how they perceive the importance of their behavior. I will discuss how they view their emotional change as good and how the services affect them in religious integration.

5.4.1 FAITH THROUGH WORKS

The children integrate through learning the rules of engagement (Frederiks 2015: 189). The children are also integrated in aspects to faith through rules, values, Christian ethics and especially through doing ‘good deeds’. McGuire explains how these could be learning to act, look or talk like the new group, for instance witnessing, prayer, and getting rid of “the old self” (McGuire 2002: 83) As we have seen this take place in Durihana, my opinion is that religion plays the role of a ladder climber here, where the top is to be like the pastor and the leaders; more selfless, more caring, less ‘bad’, less ‘negative emotions’ and more diligent. According to Frederiks this is not uncommon, that you will see new members and migrants becoming more religiously active in their new destination country (Frederiks 2015: 187).

The same way the many meetings drew some of them towards faith, it also seemed to draw others towards doubt and frustration. De said all the boys were frustrated with this (4.5.3). Interestingly enough he said their problem was not with faith, but what they had to do. He could distinguish faith from deeds, but I do not believe most of the children did. Since the girls behaved better, Kong believed they had faith, and links that with ‘living right’. He clearly saw their behavior as a proof of faith or not, and measure the faith in level of work. They all follow and do the right things in church and in front of visitors and leaders, but when in school and when they are on their own another side comes out.

The children gave different answers when asked if meetings were mandatory (4.5.1, 4.5.2), but it was clear that it felt mandatory for everyone and I wondered if they feel forced to come. McGuire states that regular meetings and gatherings is important to form a strong commitment (2002: 89). I wonder whether or not this was a conscious choice by the leaders to bring about commitment and good deeds.

Since there are so many of them it is not possible for the children to have a very close relationship with pastor Chang. Therefore what they learn from him is not seeing all sides a child would of a father, but only when he teaches and what he does when he is at Durihana. They do not get the chance to come close and see that this father figure also have flaws and faults, and that he is a normal person. In some ways I believe they idolized him and his words. He is acting in good intentions, but in this relationship there is such a distance between them which ends up with his words and actions becoming the law and the way a good Christian should be, with not many grey areas, room for failure and an understanding of grace.

I believe my research shows that actions lead to integration of faith, for some. The underlying philosophy of 'doing good deeds will lead to right faith' works for some of them. It is a long process for most of them. They are influenced by the language, the religion, social manners, and are getting a message that there is a demand to believe in God in this place, and do the right services. You will be rewarded or overlooked and even scolded if not and it can affect your social life.

Religion in this plays the role of work. While much of the teaching and environment were focused on love and concern for others, what stood out in the interviews and my impressions of the place was the focus the children had on *working on their faith*. One of the informants in one interview broke down over a fight with another person in Durihana. "I know I should forgive!" she cried, but she clearly had no idea how to do it. Forgiving seemed to be a naturally accepted 'right thing to do' in this incident.

5.4.2 BEING GOD'S DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD

When coming to Durihana the children receive a new identity, and faith is formed by the structures, leaders and underlying rules there. They work together for a common goal; freeing North Koreans, and this cause unites them. They believe they are making a difference in the world and are willing to suffer and take large risks in doing it. They also await and hope for future award through doing this. To me it appears that they start anew and learn about life from the beginning again, a 're-socialization' of their identity, their worldview and their place in the world (2.3.2). All their lives they have been 'educated' with one lifestyle, one view, no faith, now they are receiving a new education on how to live, think and believe.

I questioned through my research whether they understood Christianity as a relationship at all. My research shows their identity is mostly in their servanthood, they see themselves more as servants than friends of God, even saying that they are “not yet at a place” where they could say they know God or have a relationship with him. The problem is if Christianity is mere rules for them, or mere thankfulness, not a deeper conviction and relationship, and whether or not it is triggered by guilt and “I should believe in God”, or “I should show my thankfulness by becoming Christian.” Then being God’s disciples in the world is motivated by guilt and fear, and they are not completely free.

5.4.3 EMOTIONS AND CHANGE

The children had opportunities and struggles in the integration process, and one of the behavioral ones were a change in their emotions (see 4.3). Jia contributes it to living in Durihana, and that this emotional change is a positive transformation in her life. When she says that she is no longer angry this sounds to me like a statement of “I am a better person now than before”. The opportunity here is a chance to change their emotional behavior.

Kaia also stopped crying, but it did not mean that she is not sad any more. Hearing their stories I am wondering if they are really processing their emotions, or merely pushing down those they do not like, or are not accepted at the center. Kang-dae is not so angry any more, but he is not close to anyone there and then he leaves. Jia is happy she is not angry, but during our talks she cries and shares deep anger and resentment towards another woman at the center. This is conflicting and what we see here is that they are saying one thing that is the 'correct version' they believe is the one I want, but then contradict it later on.

Another opportunity of emotional change came through singing. Many of them mentioned that they liked and enjoyed singing in the services and in the choir as well as the performances, even those most critical and reluctant in Durihana. The music and singing together was a strong bond and brought a lot of joy to them, they explained, and many experienced change through this. Many had never sung or danced before, and music seemed to lift their hearts and spirits.

5.4.4 SERVICES - THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING ROUTINES

Some of the North Koreans Nicewander interviewed said that they missed family, daily routine, dependency and security (2013: 76). This is one thing I believe was very different in Durihana, and could be an explanation for the children to be doing fairly well, not missing family and daily routines. Routines were very important in Durihana, especially the religious ones and they were especially well kept. Storti writes about routines being the essence of adapting in a new culture. Routines are actions you do so often that you after a while do them without thinking. They usually require little mental and physical energy (2001: 5). The structure of church provides rhythm and fellowship. It showed me that they were an important part of becoming integrated, religiously and socially.

According to Berger and Luckman conversion is nothing special if the community does not continue to take faith seriously (1972). To do this Durihana used the rituals of meetings where the convert experience faith beyond the intellectual level and the faith becomes stronger (Sandland 2011: 21). These meetings became a stabilizer, and certain holding points each day that never changed and with clear expectations of certain behavior of all parts. Within these boundaries and routines the children were allowed to, with time, feel security, safety and belonging, the hymns became familiar and then dear to them. The Chinese North Koreans also learnt a lot of Korean through the sermons and understood more and more, they observed the social codes and the hierarchy in these services and learned how to behave, what was considered good and bad. If they were lonely and tended towards isolation they had to force themselves to still come to these meetings, and were then seen by peers and leaders, which never allowed them to isolate very much, and also do unaccepted behavior.

The services along with the other routines of school and meals together was so predictable and easy to learn, and yet, very effectual, in my opinion. Inside them they could rest. With a total, at times, blind trust in the leaders, many worries were taken care of for them, they did not have to think about clothes, pocket money, becoming friends, or push themselves to go to church, they just followed the rules and routines that were set for them. Samonim was excellent at providing what they needed physically and securing that routines were upheld and she functioned as the main leader of the whole center and enforced the behavioral part in the children.

My research indicates that it is good for these children to come into a tight schedule. One of the reasons could be because of their past with much uprooting and instability. The children could find a new meaning system, for instance through the services, and then naturally invest themselves in the group's activities and faith (Sandland 2011: 23). It seems rigid and very tight, controlled and strict and set, but also very warm and loving. I believe this feels safe and secure for them and gives the children a sense of control. Where they once lived in uncertainty, many in hiding, this new life provides certainty. On the other side they do not have any choice in this, and might have chosen differently if they could, but I believe my research showed that using the services as routines in many ways worked. Cultural, social and religious integration happens through these routines and their behavior is changed.

After a while, though, for some of these children, these routines become a bondage, like a shirt that is too small for them. They feel forced and start rebelling. They do not experience that they can ask questions to most of the leaders and for some it makes them turn the doubt inwardly, like De.

5.5 COMMITMENT

In this part I will discuss how commitment provides a religious framework in Durihana, and how some of them react to this. I will also discuss my theories on how I believe their commitment would be able to sustain past Durihana, indicating the depth of it.

5.5.1 COMMITMENT AND CONFORMING

In Durihana religion plays the role of a framework. They are not just working for God, they are dedicating their lives to the cause of rescuing other North Koreans. Many, like Kong, have a deep commitment to this 'all for one, one for all' attitude, and living, sharing and suffering together strengthen this commitment to a degree where some of them 'own it'. Some months after I left I was informed that he had gone back to China on a rescue mission and was almost imprisoned. He was willing to risk his life for the cause he believed in (Janet). A conversion needs structures where the conversion can be confirmed, being a backbone to sustain conversion, according to Sandland (2011: 15). And the structure where this conversion is being confirmed, is Kong and the other children's commitment. They integrate by committing, and their understanding of religion is that you devote your

life to it.

Religion also plays the role of a security net. The children always have a home in Durihana. They can always come back, even if they backstab the pastor or leave. This makes the commitment many of them have deep, because they know they are always welcomed.

When Kyung-mi says that she ‘should not act independently’ I understood that independence could be a threat to a homogenous group like this. One manner it manages to be successful is in having a firm established hierarchy and not too many unwilling members that question leadership, which could cause chaos to the group. If they are not open to change, or if the leaders do not treat the group well this can become problematic. It can silence important critique and questions what could in the long run help the group. When most of the informants were reluctant to share how they were doing in Durihana, and communicate their concerns, it can be appropriate to ask whether this collective thinking has gone too far to the degree where the individual either is too fearful to speak up against the group, or by other reasons do not wish to voice their opinion.

Kyung-mi continued with: “*I should conform.*” Conforming is an important element in Durihana. They all change, according to the pastor and my informants, by conforming, not standing out, even emotionally. There is not much room for individualism. I would state that unless you conform there is not a possibility of successful integration at Durihana. De said he would only take care of himself and ended up leaving. Kang-dae did not fully conform either, became frustrated and left. Both of them experienced an increasing disengagement to the group (McGuire 2002: 91). In a system like this, when not experiencing what most of them are feeling, belonging to a community and one faith, staying will feel insufficient. Both went on and tried other defector schools without the Christian focus. Since being outspoken about his deep fascination with Christianity since childhood and diligence in wanting to believe, it is possible that De’s disengagement in Durihana will still lead him to what he will experience as, what some members who disengage in one religious community to join another, would call a more pure ideology and practice (McGuire 2002: 95).

5.5.2 LOOSE COMMITMENT

Many of the children and youth have come and left Durihana for various reasons. This shows that at least a good portion of the them have a weak link to Durihana and will leave if it does not fulfill their expectations. The commitment process that McGuire writes about is then stopped and they choose to break out (2002).

When the children told me about their secrets that they did not share with anyone else, especially the leaders, this led me to believe that they are not fully open with leaders and peers and seem to choose carefully who they share which information with. They are close to some and have a strong community, but I wondered if the commitment is not. I could detect three of the four stages that McGuire says characterizes an exit; doubts, weighing the alternatives and turning point. It seemed to me that Kang-dae had given up already and De was in a turning point process (2002: 92).

The paradox that there was surprisingly much change within the structures was an interesting side of the commitment aspect (4.6.3). Could it be that the structures were so strict that the leaders and children were unable to follow through with them? Janet and I also discussed this part of Korean culture and Durihana culture, whether this could be signs of bad planning, extreme impulsivity, selfishness or mainly a hierarchy where the leaders expect to be followed immediately.

Durihana in Seoul, the heart of South Korea, does not have much interaction with South Koreans and is in many ways what we can describe as a bubble world with a strong “we against them”-feeling and distinct lines between the community and the outside world (McGuire 2002: 87-88). But how would it be like to not fit into this world? I analyzed Kong, the ‘golden child’ earlier in this chapter, being looked up to and praised, being on the inside. But here I want to take a look at a couple on the outside. One of them was Kang-dae who I observed playing with the children, but also telling them in a harsh tone what they had to do. Kang-dae had never thought about his own faith, which I found interesting having lived for so long in a very Christian profiled school, and he could not claim any ‘personal faith’ of his own. Though he enjoyed singing the songs it was clear that he did not fully fit in, and I was not surprised when he left. Was he an outsider partly because he did not take on the role as an older Christian brother, praying fervently, wanting leading roles on stage or in the dramas or showing up at every prayer meeting? Was he not committed enough? Because he did not ‘do’ enough good deeds and were not a fervent outspoken Christian, he had less value at the center which affected his social life, as

mentioned. One could wonder if that itself could be a hindrance for religious integration. If he was aware of it, it might have been harder to surrender, and the expectations of what you had to do could become a barrier in itself.

De was also on the outside and had a weak commitment to Durihana, though he was well liked and loved the leaders. Volunteers said that by his actions it seemed like his faith had grown, but he seemed to have too many thoughts of his own and were too individualistic to completely fit in, and I believe that is one of the main reasons he left Durihana.

5.5.3 COMMITMENT PAST DURIHANA

For those that fully believe; the conversion has happened, they fully belong; are seen by others and their behavior is altered, it is still in a vacuum, so interconnected with Durihana, and so frail in a bigger picture, and disconnected to the whole society, Christianity in South Korea, the public schools and universities, that without Durihana to uphold these beliefs I am afraid for many it is unsustainable. All three of them; the *belonging*, when Durihana is so different than 'normal life' would not necessary mean belonging in South Korean society. When it comes to *believing* it could have a better chance of surviving, since there are many Presbyterian conservative churches in the city. Yet full of South Koreans with a different culture could prove the way of believing to be very different. Christianity is experiencing a decline in the country, especially among youth. Their *behavior* I believe would be affected, having learned skills and knowing how to distinguish right from wrong, but with a victim mentality, and a society where they are lowest class, not understood and given the worst jobs, if any, they would still be prone to crimes, drugs and unemployment. The behavior they have been taught in Durihana would meet much resistance outside. I am afraid that only the strongest of them would survive - and it would be dependent on finding community and church fellowship within a larger context, and possibly help them with struggles on deeper levels as well as a job, life skills, relationship skills and such.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

I believe my research and analysis show that many of the children have been integrated into Durihana and have adopted a faith through the religious system of religious rules, strong structures and the leadership, as well as the teachings of the pastor and youth pastor, and their stories of hardship and suffering of North Korean dissidents. In seeing the pastor 'laying down his life for them' and the other leaders giving their all, this creates a security net for them to develop trust and faith within. Love is constantly being shown in action from them and the deeds of other helpers and volunteers.

The children are loved and feel it, they have a lot of joy and fun, and clearly feel some belonging to Durihana. They change their moods and conduct and generally behave well and admire the leaders and pastor.

On a deep level there are many problems and issues not addressed and not handled, which I believe has a greater affect when the children become older or leave Durihana. There are clearly mental, social and emotional issues that are not handled, like loneliness and struggles. There are signs of rebellion against the system with all the services and rules enforced on them, and many are unhappy about this. There is very little integration into the South Korean society. These children do not know how to live in the South Korean society, but maybe some of them will learn enough in Durihana to handle it when they become older. They are very much being sheltered in Durihana, though they travel and perform extensively, and have little interaction with the outside world, besides church visits and reporters and other media. Though I believe they are joyful and feel at home in Durihana there is a deep sense of loneliness in them, and they all say they have very hard times. This seem to be temporarily, but not necessarily dealt with.

The picture I am left with is complex, with multiple layers and not simple to analyze and conclude on. Looking for 'the truth of Durihana' would be in vain for me to attempt. I can only offer suggestions and some insight and understanding of the culture from a Western perspective, trying to interpret a Eastern culture.

Some are socially integrated in Durihana, but not necessarily in their beliefs. They know how to act and

what is expected, but that does not mean they have a genuine faith or have had a conversion or heart change. This could be hidden in a setting like this. If you keep your problems and questions to yourself and behave according to what is expected of you, it will be assumed that you are integrated and that you are a Christian. Like Kong described the girls - “the way they act it looks like they have faith.”

Durihana has been ‘faithful with little’. The pastor started with almost nothing and has continue to build and rescued more North Koreans. The leaders have been very bold to do this, and has created much with what they had. There are strict boundaries, and the children and adults seem to ‘just know’ what is appropriate and not. This creates safety, but also a culture where many important issues are ‘swept under the rug’, never addressed or talked about, never criticized or questioned.

You have a group that have a clear sense of belonging described above, like Kong and Kyung-mi, and one that only partly does, like De. They all have doubts and struggles, but seemingly those who do not belong describe a weaker link to faith, not having yet a relationship with God. Part of the group behaves well all the time and has changed the way of living and speaking. Another part only behaves in church or when the pastor and leaders are around. And in which order is it happening in? The children describe believing as a process, little by little, hearing more and more, affected by the belonging they felt in Durihana and all the love and protection, structure and care from the workers there.

The increasingly strong belief was affected by belonging and behaving. It seems like instead of one following the other, all of them happened gradually, *simultaneously*. Not like Greek Western thinking, linear, first one thing then another, but all three at the same time. Believing gradually, belonging more day by day, and changing their behavior little by little, as if the three processes happened at the same time next to each other, dependent on each other, if belonging did not happen well, it would affect the belief and the behavior.

Some of my suggestions are that religion functions as an overriding umbrella in Durihana, like the pillars in the house, like the carpet they walk on. If it was swept away from under their feet, everything would fall.

LIMITATIONS TO THIS STUDY:

Limitation to this study was that I did not speaking Korean, having to depend on Korean and Chinese translators. Some of the question are also opinion based. Some answers I can not determined if the subjects told me what I wanted to hear, but living there for altogether two months I hope I was able to fill out the gap, and distinguish when model answers were given to portray it realistically. I had few students to interview, six youth.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

	Children in High School	Information		Adults	Role	Information
1	Kong	Age: 16, male. In Durihana: 1-2 years	1	Janet	Korean translator, teacher and assistant of pastor Chang	Korean Western
2	Kyung-mi	Age: 15, female. In Durihana: 1 year.	2	Miss Han	Teacher in Durihana	Korean
3	Kang-dae	Age: 18, male. In Durihana: 6 months, his second time.	3	Pastor Chang	Pastor and leader of Durihana	Korean
4	Kaia	Age: 15, female. In Durihana: 2-3 years.	4	Samonim	Wife of pastor Chang, leader of school	Korean
5	Jia	Age: 16, female. In Durihana: 1-2 years.	5	Kayla	Chinese translator	American
6	De	Age: 15, male. In Durihana: 6 months.	6	Pastor Park	Volunteer speaker, friend of pastor Chang	Korean American
			7	Mark	Volunteer assistant of pastor Chang	European

Appendix 2



High-context culture versus low-context cultures (Communicating across culture)

[https://www.google.no/search?q=High-context+culture+versus+low-context+cultures+\(Communicating+across+culture\)&client=safari&rls=en&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj2e3nxe7MAhVF3SwKHVXTCK0Q_AUIBygB&biw=1366&bih=706#imgrc=BVoDZQFbUC1WSM%3A](https://www.google.no/search?q=High-context+culture+versus+low-context+cultures+(Communicating+across+culture)&client=safari&rls=en&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj2e3nxe7MAhVF3SwKHVXTCK0Q_AUIBygB&biw=1366&bih=706#imgrc=BVoDZQFbUC1WSM%3A) May 22nd 10.43 PM

Øyvind Dahl has another curve, but I chose to use one I found on internet because it included Korea.

Interview guide

- Welcome, hand out participation sheet.

Background questions:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Past and present living conditions
4. Family situation
5. Position at Durihana, how long have you lived here
6. Past and present religious affiliation.
 1. Can you say anything about previous experiences with religion prior to coming to Durihana?
 2. Have you heard about religion? Have you heard about others that have had it, have they heard about it? Have you been to a church? Were you warned about it?
 3. Can you sum up your understanding of Christianity prior to coming to Durihana?
 4. How were you in any way affected by previous religious and/or Christian experiences prior to coming to Durihana?
7. How was growing up in North Korea/China?
8. How did you come here?

Key questions:

9. Tell about your daily and weekly life at Durihana. What is mandatory? What happens if you don't come to a meeting? What do you think and feel during the services?
10. What are your present personal beliefs and convictions?
11. Has the experience with Christianity at Durihana in any ways changed you or the way you live, act, worship, think? How?
12. Has there been any negative experience with Christianity at Durihana? Which ones? Positive ones? Conflicts?
13. Tell about the teachers and leaders.
14. What happens if you are having a hard time at Durihana?
15. How are new ideas welcomed, concerning lifestyle, faith?

16. What is popular/not popular to talk about among yourselves?
17. What is popular/not popular to talk about with your leaders? What will you be praised for doing? What will you be disciplined for doing?
18. Have you been t another church?
19. Have you met other Christians outside Durihana?
20. How is your social life in Durihana, and how is your social life outside Durihana?

Summary questions:

- Did I understand this right?
- Do you want to add anything?

- Thank you for your cooperation!

Enquiry for participation in research project

”North Korean defectors religious integration at Durihana”

Background and purpose

This study is a preparation for a master assignment at Misjonshøgskolen in Stavanger. The purpose is to discover how and if North Korean defectors integrate religiously at the Christian defector center Durihana in Seoul, South-Korea. You are asked to participate in this study because you are a North Korean defector currently living at Durihana.

What does participation imply in this study?

Participation implies a maximum one hour long interview (this was changed to two interviews with consent from the participants. The enquiry was translated into Korean), and observation at Durihana, its school, dormitory, church room and office. Name, age, gender and other information that may lead to recognition of you will not be written down. The interview will be recorded, but information about you that could lead to recognition will not be recorded. During the interview you will be asked about your personal opinions and perception about your stay at Durihana, your religious beliefs before and now and whether you experience integration or not. During observation the researcher will be present at meetings, at school, in the office, in the dormitory and the church room over a six week period. The reason why is to get to know the social and professional life at Durihana, learn about the culture and to put the interview into a context.

What happens to the information about you?

All personal information will be treated confidentially. The only place your name is written down is at the bottom of this form. It will be contained separate to other material connected to this study. No names and personal characteristics will be written down any other place or be mentioned on recordings. It will not be possible to recognize you from the rapport from Durihana or in the interviews. The master project is planned to be finished in December 2015 (changed to May 2016). At that point all recordings, written documentation and interviews will be deleted and maculated. You will remain

anonymous.

Voluntarily participation

It is voluntarily to participate in this study, and you can, whenever you want to, withdraw your consent without giving any reason. If you choose to withdraw, you will remain anonymous.

If you wish to participate or have enquiries to this study, please contact project leader Renate at renatesolberg@gmail.com or supervisor Kari at kari.storstein.haug@mhs.no.

(The study is reported to 'Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS'.)

Agreement to participation in this study

I have received the information about this study, and am willing to participate.

.....

(name and date)